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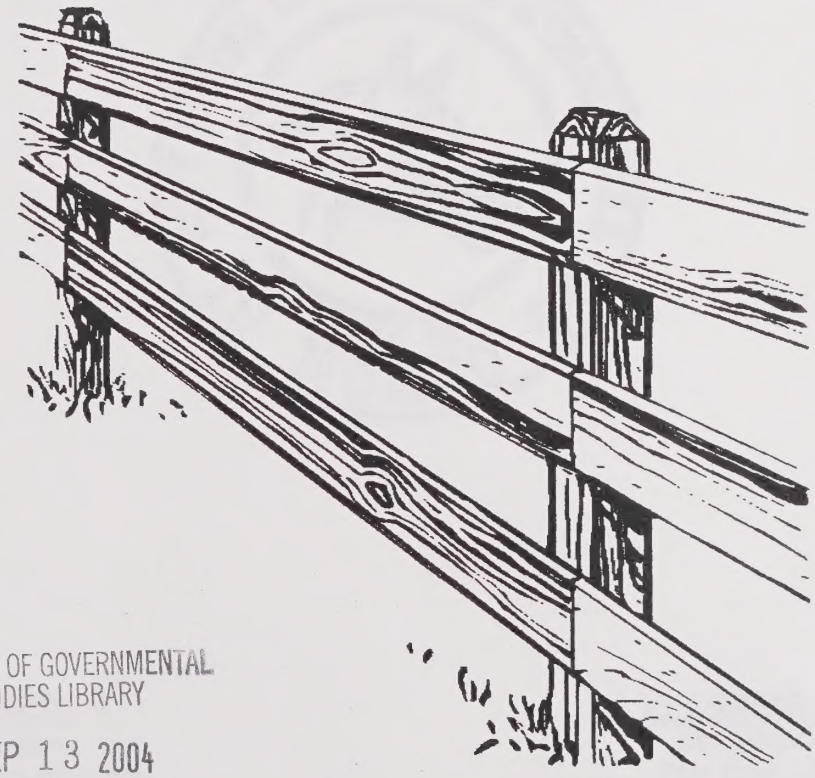
CITY OF NORCO GENERAL PLAN

LAND USE ELEMENT



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2004 0393

NORCO

LAND USE ELEMENT

ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION NO. 2001-44
JUNE 6, 2001

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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE LAND USE ELEMENT

The City of Norco was incorporated to preserve a small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle. Primary to this goal is the maintenance of residential lots that will accommodate and encourage animal keeping and agriculture at a family scale, a concept that dates back to early colonial times. It is important that the Land Use Element be established so that all other elements of the General Plan support animal keeping and agrarian land uses in perpetuity for all new residents to the City. Therefore, the Land Use Element has as its primary goal the maintenance of the small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle, to which all other elements of the General Plan must be consistent.

In addition, the Land Use Element must provide for all of the land uses (i.e. commercial and public areas) that will sustain the community and support the preservation of the small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle as a viable land use in an increasingly urban region. In an urban setting, the City of Norco provides a unique opportunity to maintain a certain residential type that is not readily available at a community scale elsewhere in the region.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT

It is the purpose of the Land Use Element to provide appropriate land for the variety of activities including residential, commercial, public, etc., and to guide the manner in which each land use is developed and used. In so doing, the element intends to create and regulate a compatible and functional interrelationship between the various land uses in the City of Norco.

The Land Use Element, required by law since 1955, has the broadest scope of the seven mandatory General Plan elements. It embodies most of the concerns of the other six elements and plays a central role in synthesizing all land use issues. By definition in Government Code Section 65302(a):

> *"A land use element designates the proposed general distribution, general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall also identify areas covered by the plan which are subject to flooding and shall be reviewed annually with respect to such areas".*

This Element presents a land use plan with the associated policies that establish a pattern of land use in the City and sets standards and guidelines for the development of those land uses. It is a long-range plan (to the year 2020) and is based on current community goals as well as foreseeable needs and constraints of the community.

1.2 REQUIREMENTS

The California Government Code requires that general plans contain a land use element or section which designates the proposed general distribution, location and extent (including standards for population density and building intensity) of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private use.

It is the intent of the Land Use Element to:

- Promote a balanced and functional mix of land uses consistent with community values;
- Provide for the growth of housing and employment opportunities in keeping with community goals and consistent with planned infrastructure and service capacities;
- Guide public and private investments;
- Reflect the opportunities and constraints affecting land use identified in the other elements of the general plan; and,
- Reduce loss of life, injuries, damage to property, and economic and social dislocation resulting from flooding and other hazards.

1.3 DEFINING NORCO'S LIFESTYLE AND PRIINCIPLE LAND USE

Norco was incorporated for the purpose of preserving a lifestyle that is increasingly difficult to maintain in the rapidly urbanizing areas of Southern California. Many of Norco's residents once lived in Los Angeles and Orange counties in communities that started as equestrian areas but then were zoned out as higher density urbanization encroached. Norco was created to preserve lots big enough to accommodate small plot agriculture, animal keeping and the equestrian lifestyle. The City was designed from the start so that higher density residential development could not eventually create political pressure to abandon the animal keeping lifestyle.

To understand the cornerstone of lifestyle in the City of Norco, it is necessary to define what is meant by certain statements and phrases that are used to define that lifestyle.

- Small plot agriculture: an historical family-based agricultural system that was the basis for agricultural production in the founding days of this country, and which to a large extent has been replaced by large agribusinesses. It is still a viable land use for agricultural production and the raising of animals,

particularly at a family scale where principles and trades can be taught that are not readily available in other avenues of modern education. For many families in Norco, this is an important part of our heritage, and of the principles of self-reliance, that needs to be preserved. The opportunities for this type of lifestyle in an urban setting are becoming increasingly difficult to find in Southern California; and communities in urban settings that are established on these principles are even more rare.

- Animal keeping: The City of Norco is committed to residences that allow the keeping of animals. Lots not only have to have the appropriate size, but also a topography that allows for adequate area to safely keep animals. For lots that have manufactured slopes, pads need to be large enough to accommodate the residence and animal keeping areas both. Building coverage on lots is restricted to insure that adequate room is maintained.

- Equestrian: Regulations controlling residential development in Norco are designed to accommodate the keeping of many types of animals not allowed in urban residential zones. The focus of community design however, is the promotion of an animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle. All public streets must have at least one equestrian trail on one side of the street. Commercial developments accommodate watering troughs, tie-ups, and other amenities as feasible.

- Rural: Norco is a community preserving aspects of a rural lifestyle that existed in this area before the rapid urbanization that characterizes western Riverside County. Those aspects that are core to the image and lifestyle of Norco are the large lots to accommodate small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian land uses, and the "rural" style street improvements with equestrian/pedestrian trails, equestrian fencing, rolled curbs, minimal street lighting, and no sidewalks (in residential zones).

1.4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NORCO

The pre-European history of Norco is much like the rest of Southern California where various tribes of Indians occupied the different portions of the region. The Luiseno Indians used and occupied a region that included the Norco-Corona area. The main village was in Temescal Canyon, and the Norco area was used as a hunting-gathering location. In 1846 the Norco area became part of a Mexican land grant, part of which was eventually purchased for the purpose of growing orange trees. That was not successful and the land was sold and subdivided as part of the Riverside Orange Heights Tract.

The concept of "Norco" began as a subdivision of the Corona Land Company in 1910, which again attempted to develop the area with orchard citrus crops, avocados, olives, etc. Years of experimentation showed the area was not suited to that purpose because of high winds, frost and poor soil conditions. In 1921 the property was sold to the North Corona Land Company. At that time, fewer than 100 families resided in the area which was mainly a small farming community. The farmers gradually ventured into animal raising, especially poultry and rabbits, some of which are still active today.

By the mid-1920's, the North Corona Land Company owned 5,409 acres in the area, when the first school and the Norconian Club were constructed. The Norconian Club was constructed at a hot sulfur well discovered while digging for irrigation water. It occupied a 700-acre site and was for years a favorite of Hollywood celebrities. Its use declined during the 1930's and in 1941 the Club was sold to the U.S. Navy for use as a hospital, which was subsequently declared surplus after the war. The grounds and buildings have since been divided and now function as a Naval Ordinance Laboratory and a narcotics rehabilitation incarceration center.

The community's first public recreational facility was developed in 1948 when the old Norco School (see above) was acquired for use as a community center. The Norco Recreation and Park District was then formed to maintain and operate the property. During the 1950's and 1960's Norco began to experience more growth, resulting from the population explosion occurring throughout the Southern California metropolitan area. The San Bernardino and Riverside freeways made the area more accessible from Los Angeles and Orange Counties, and Norco's animal keeping lifestyle came within commuting distance of major centers of employment. Because of rapid growth in surrounding communities, and the previous loss of other animal keeping communities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties when development pressures increased there, the City of Norco was incorporated in 1964 to preserve the animal keeping community that had established roots here.

2.0 LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

The City of Norco has as its stated goal for the City, the preservation of a small plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle which by its nature requires a unique approach to land use for a city in an urban setting. The primary intent of the land use goals is to protect this unique lifestyle from development pressures and land use incompatibility issues that generally come with an increase in land use intensity from the other land uses (i.e. commercial and industrial) that a well-rounded and stable community requires.

2.1 LAND USE ISSUES

2.1.1 LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

Of primary importance to the City of Norco is the preservation of the historical small plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle. In order for the City of Norco to remain an intact community that can meet its own fiscal needs, there needs to be a mix of land uses including commercial development. Commercial development with its corresponding sales tax provides income to the City that property tax from residential development does not. A tax base based solely on the income generated by residential property tax is not enough for a jurisdiction to provide all of the services that residents expect from the City. That is where commercial development becomes vital to the viability of a city.

The inherent problem is the impact of commercial development on neighborhoods that are quiet in nature, with equestrian trails along all of the streets. Traffic, noise, hours of operation, and light are just some of the possible impacts. These problems become more severe the closer together two different types of land uses become and/or the more intense a type of use becomes such as some industrial uses. With its equestrian lifestyle so embedded in the community, noise impacts that are standard in suburbs present an additional level of danger to the equestrian. The City needs to maintain a land use plan that keeps commercial development and traffic routes to the commercial development as separate as possible from the City's residential areas.

2.1.2 LIMITATIONS ON FUTURE GROWTH

The City of Norco is nearing buildout conditions in its residentially zoned areas and has a limited supply of commercial and industrial zoned properties. Additionally, the City's sphere of influence does not cover much more area than what is within the City's limits. The significance being that under the existing political geography, there will not be significant areas in which the City can have future growth unless the City boundaries and/or the sphere-of-influence changes. Most of the available land for development consists of infill properties in the commercial and residential zones. In the industrial zones there are still large areas that are open, but the overall amount of industrially zoned land is small (see Table 3.1).

2.1.3 DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF A UNIQUE LIFESTYLE

The most important issue affecting the lifestyle that has been the center of community affairs since incorporation, is the maintenance of a residential community that keeps animals. As growth continues to place more demand for Inland Empire housing, the availability of large affordable lots grows increasingly

smaller. The demand for "estate lots" increases along with the demand for "animal keeping" lots, especially with Norco's proximity to Los Angeles and Orange Counties. This is the same type of land use conflict that eventually changed original animal keeping communities in those two counties. The maintenance of lot size, dimension, and setback requirements will help preserve lots that accommodate animal keeping. A coordinated land use pattern that takes into consideration the animal keeping needs of the community will also help to preserve the viability of that use in the City. The City shall also coordinate closely with schools, the University of Cooperative Extension 4H, Future Farmers of America, and Grange for the continuation of school competitions, rodeos, and educational programs based on animal keeping and animal husbandry.

2.1.4 COMMUNITY DESIGN COHESION

Community design defines and enhances the character of a community through the interrelation of the built and natural environments. The elements of community design occur at different levels and from different perspectives. At the pedestrian scale, detailed articulation of building structures and landscaping provides a positive experience for users of the site and adjoining sites. Standard "modern California cookie-cutter" design may not be adequate. Each site needs to be designed both as an individual unit and as part of an overall neighborhood and area, and not just as "another unit in a regional chain".

Site specific improvements, however, do not have the same affect for drive-by traffic on streets, especially higher-speed corridors. Visual corridors, primarily along the major streets are often the most identifiable design element of a community, but do not allow for the pondered absorption of details that can occur at a pedestrian pace. As a vehicle travels, there are two views, the foreground view consisting of building facades, landscaping, and streetscape; and the background consisting of the mountains north and south, the hills to the east, Beacon Hill, and views of the valley from higher vistas. As such, visual corridors should be identified so that building and landscaping can be designed to protect as many vistas as possible.

The City promotes a design theme that is reminiscent of the "Old West", and as such that architectural statement is generally promoted. Some areas, however, have been primarily designed with more contemporary styles. Neighborhood and area identification play an important role in community identity, and it is not necessary that every neighborhood or area have exactly the same design styles. By establishing areas and neighborhoods as unique entities within the design framework of the community, the City helps establish and maintain the vitality and distinctiveness of a neighborhood. Coinciding with distinct neighborhood identities, historical and natural elements become important anchors.

The development and maintenance of a positive community identity is a combination of private and public efforts, but is primarily accomplished over the long term through incremental private investment in property improvements. Some large-scale public investment can occur, but these opportunities will be limited because of budget constraints.

2.1.5 PROTECTED HABITAT/SPECIES

The Western Riverside Council of Governments is in the process of establishing a habitat conservation plan that would be region wide and go towards providing protection to 126 species. The species that would benefit are already listed as endangered, or are being proposed, or are those that are strong candidates to be proposed in the future. The purpose of the plan is to establish large areas, interconnected where feasible, that are most suitable for habitat preservation to the benefit of as many species as possible within the same conservation areas. The habitat plan builds off of the Stephen's kangaroo rat (SKR) habitat conservation plan that was begun in the 1980's. At that time, Norco was outside of the historical habitat area for the SKR and so was not involved in that plan. Since that time, SKR have been found in the Norco Hills and land owners or developers have been required to obtain their own permits (Section 10a) from the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife Service.

The conservation plan being considered has three alternatives. The only areas in Norco that are identified on any of the alternative plans, is Norco Hills which is identified in one alternative, and the Santa Ana River which is identified in all three. Norco Hills is only included as part of the most aggressive alternative which would preserve the greatest amount of acreage and is only included as a possible "additional site". The Norco Hills area is identified as a "substantial habitat block" in that it is currently a large intact block of vacant land. The study also recognizes, however, that while the Norco Hills may have a focus species of concern within it, or may have a variety of species, it does not support substantial populations or does not have enough habitat to sustain a focus species.

Under the alternative that includes Norco Hills, the degree to which the alternative achieves the goals and principles of the conservation plan will need to be evaluated in more detail at a later date. The bottom line is that the Norco Hills are not a critical element to the success of the conservation plan for any of the focus species, and are only included as a potential area for additional moderate conservation efforts. With the adoption of the Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan which proposes development over a large area of the hillsides, it is likely that upon more detailed evaluation, Norco Hills would not be included in any final focused conservation plan.

The only other habitat and/or species in the proposed conservation plan that are of concern to Norco, are fish species in the Santa Ana River. Under all three of the alternatives being considered above, these species are considered "protected" as is the Santa Ana River habitat. Since it is proposed in the Land Use Element that areas within the floodplain of the river remain as open space, there is nothing that would prohibit the implementation of the proposed western County multi-species habitat conservation plan.

2.1.6 BLIGHTED AREAS

Section 2.1.4 addresses the need for design cohesion within neighborhoods and within the overall community. One of the primary obstacles to achieving this, especially in commercial areas, is the existence of blight. Blight occurs in areas that are generally older and are not well maintained. The result is sporadic development, inconsistent design, and properties that do not achieve the highest and best use possible, for lack of investment incentives. One condition that helps blight to get established, and which is true in Norco, is small lot configurations with many different owners. Efforts to buy properties and/or develop a cohesive commercial center are hampered by many owners with different ideas and intentions for their property. Many times, the values of those properties are artificially escalated when interest of acquiring and assembling properties for development has been expressed. This only hampers the process further, encouraging the continuation of blighted conditions.

Two areas of concern are located along Hamner Avenue. The first is located in and around Acre Street where the topography of the land slopes down from Hamner Avenue and where access into some of the interior lots is taken from a private street (Acre Street), the legal ownership and use of which is unclear. Historically this has been an area of mixed commercial, residential, and outdoor storage uses.

A second area of concern is the commercial district along Hamner Avenue between Third Street and Fourth Street. This area has a higher rate of land use than the Acre Street area, but the development pattern is inconsistent, and many properties between Hamner Avenue and the freeway have long deep lots, the rear portions of which have a tendency towards unsightly storage. Some lots in this area have sat vacant for many years because of a perceived lack of development value.

Sixth Street is another commercial area that suffers from small parcels that are narrow and deep with many different owners and intentions for the property. Land use regulations prohibit new residential construction, and economic conditions are such that commercial construction has not been attracted to the area in large numbers. This is especially true on the eastern portion of the street

where the lots are farthest away from the freeway and the Hamner Avenue commercial corridor.

2.2 RESIDENTIAL-SMALL PLOT AGRIUCULTURE/ANIMAL KEEPING GOAL- PROMOTE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF THE CITIZENS OF NORCO BY ADOPTING STANDARDS FOR THE PROPER BALANCE, RELATIONSHIP, AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTIAL LAND USES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY'S SMALL PLOT AGRICULTURAL/ANIMAL KEEPING/EQUESTRIAN LIFESTYLE (SEE ALSO THE GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT AND THE NORCO REDEVELOMENT PROJECT AREA PLAN).

2.2.1 RESIDENTIAL/SMALL PLOT AGRIGULTURE PROTECTION POLICY: Replacement residential development shall preserve existing single-family residential uses at similar densities.

Policy 2.2.1a. Existing A-1 zones, and related residential zones with similar densities shall not be rezoned for higher intensity residential uses.

Policy 2.2.1b. Senior housing and senior care housing shall be allowed in all zones, but shall not be built at densities greater than what is compatible with adjacent land uses.

Policy 2.2.1c. The City shall investigate the possibility of allowing animal keeping bonuses to encourage the merger of vacant legal non-conforming lots with adjacent residential lots that already permit animal keeping. Such a provision may also include a requirement for the recordation of permanent animal keeping easements on such lots.

Policy 2.2.1d. The City shall encourage residential open areas at a scale that encourages the small-plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle.

Policy 2.2.1e. In residential zones that allow animal keeping, the City shall encourage lot development that adequately provides the necessary area and terrain to effectively maintain the health and safety of animals.

The objective of the residential-small plot agriculture/animal keeping protection policy is to insure that existing residential-small plot agricultural neighborhoods are not changed or impacted through increases in housing density. Likewise, it is to insure that future housing is built to match the existing residential land patterns in the City.

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development

2.2.2 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POLICY: Low income, single-family units shall receive priority consideration in the implementation of any residential rehabilitation programs implemented by the City.
Policy 2.2.2a. As is possible, the City shall instigate concerted public and private investment toward the upgrading and rehabilitation of older dwellings and toward the removal of substandard units.

Policy 2.2.2b. The City shall enforce property maintenance standards to insure that existing affordable units stay in the City's overall housing pool.

Policy 2.2.2c. The City shall use housing programs to retrofit and improve existing housing units.

The objective of the housing development policy is to encourage the development of viable attractive neighborhoods, free from blight and deterioration, with units available for a variety of household incomes.

Responsible Agencies: Department of Community Development, Economic Development Agency

2.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL- TO ACHIEVE A STABLE TAX BASE WITH A BALANCED MIXTURE OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF INCREASED REGIONAL INTEREST IN THE I-15 CORRIDOR.

2.3.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY: The City will seek to establish a stable tax base by expanding the economic base of the community through active encouragement of commercial and industrial development so as to not adversely affect the viability of the community's small plot agricultural/residential lifestyle.

Policy 2.3.1a. The City will accommodate, where feasible, the retention and expansion of existing businesses within the community.

Policy 2.3.1b. All commercial facilities shall be built and maintained in accordance with Health and Safety Code Requirements and shall meet seismic safety regulations and environmental regulations including noise, air quality, water, and other environmental resources as they apply.

Policy 2.3.1c. Develop parking regulations/guidelines that encourage employers to provide incentives for using public transportation.

Policy 2.3.1d. The City shall encourage the rehabilitation of existing substandard blighted commercial and industrial uses through the combined efforts of private and public sectors to revitalize and upgrade aesthetic and functional deficiencies.

The objective of economic development policies is to achieve overall effective land use in the City by eliminating blight, and making commercial areas more marketable for development to insure that the City can maintain its small plot agricultural lifestyle with a vibrant and growing tax base.

Responsible Agencies: Department of Community Development, Economic Development Agency

2.4 COMMUNITY DESIGN GOAL- TO ACHIEVE AN OVERALL DESIGN STATEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY THAT ESTABLISHES IT AS A VISUALLY DESTINCT AND UNIQUE COMMUNITY.

2.4.1 COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICY: Development shall include elements of design that relate a particular project to its immediate neighborhood, district, street corridor, and community.

Policy 2.4.1a. New development in the City should incorporate a western-themed architectural style unless the development occurs where a different style has become predominant through recent project development.

Policy 2.4.1b. Freestanding signage shall be kept at a minimum. What signage that does occur (exclusive of pylon and pole signs) shall be low in profile to preclude unnecessary clutter along the City's visual corridors.

Policy 2.4.1c, Street and on-site landscaping shall be provided in such a way so as to create pleasing site-related aesthetics, but not so as to block visual corridors and vista points on a neighborhood and community scale.

Policy 2.4.1d. The City shall identify prominent vista points and visual corridors for the purpose of preserving these vital elements of the community's character.

Policy 2.4.1e. The City shall promote the development of high quality commercial and public facilities requiring landscaping, maintenance, and permanent upkeep on all new development.

Policy 2.4.1f. New office, research, and industrial development shall be developed in accordance with approved guidelines and/or within height limits to minimize encroachment into expansive views of the horizon.

Policy 2.4.1g. Commercial development proposed in areas that adjoin residential development shall provide adequate buffering by landscaping, screening, or open space. Height limits shall be established in all commercial zones so as to protect the privacy and solar access on adjacent residential lots.

Policy 2.4.1h. Outdoor storage shall only be permitted in appropriate zones and only as an ancillary use to an otherwise permitted land use and in the appropriate zoning district. Land uses for which parking and/or outdoor storage is the primary use shall be not permitted, or shall be substantially controlled through architectural and landscaping design.

Policy 2.4.1i. The City shall develop architectural guidelines for the portions of Hamner Avenue not contained within a specific plan to visually unify the varied commercial land uses and building types.

Policy 2.4.1j. The City shall seek opportunities to eliminate physical blight by removing or renovating deteriorated and functionally obsolete structures that lack historic or aesthetic value.

Policy 2.4.1k. The City shall implement new landscaping requirements increasing where necessary the amount of landscaping required for commercial development, especially for areas with significant public exposure.

Policy 2.4.1l. The City shall investigate and implement where feasible, a public open space landscaping program that could include preservation of existing native vegetation in new development, and the planting of (or preservation of) highly visible landscape pockets along major corridors that can identify the community.

The objective of the community design policies is to have each property in the City contribute to an overall positive aesthetic experience, relating to site specific, neighborhood, district, and community scale aesthetics.

Responsible Agencies: Department of Community Development, Economic Development Agency.

2.5 PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY USES GOAL – THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES THAT PROVIDE FOR THE VARIED NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND ESTABLISH THE ANIMAL KEEPING LIFESTYLE THAT IS CENTRAL TO ITS CITIZENS. SHOULD SET THE EXAMPLE FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND LANDSCAPING DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

2.5.1 EQUESTRIAN AND ANIMAL KEEPING FACILITIES POLICY: The City shall construct and seek opportunities for assistance to construct and/or enhance facilities that preserve and encourage the equestrian lifestyle that is central to the identity of the community.

Policy 2.5.1a. The City shall construct adequate public arenas, stalls, and exercise areas within easy access of all neighborhoods and trails.

Policy 2.5.1b. The City shall construct staging areas in strategic locals in the City that will allow residents and non-residents with equestrian trailers to park trailers and have access to open space resources and training areas, as well as to the City's extensive trail system.

Policy 2.5.1c. Where commercial and office development meant for general public access adjoins equestrian trails, or has trails easily accessible to the site, the project shall include such equestrian amenities as corrals, watering troughs, hitching posts, etc.

Policy 2.5.1d. The City should seek out museums and commercial venues that are compatible with the community and the neighborhood in which they are located that promote, support, remember, and/or encourage the equestrian heritage of the community and the historical west.

Policy 2.5.1e. The City shall use minor plots of surplus property that are adjacent to trails for rest stops, corrals, watering troughs, etc. where the situation supports the development and use of these types of amenities.

Policy 2.5.1f. The City shall continue Capital Improvement Program phasing to construct equestrian fencing, mark trails, and prohibit parking along all of the trails in the City to encourage safe use of the facilities.

2.5.2 GENERAL ANIMAL KEEPING POLICIES: The City shall construct necessary facilities within public areas to insure that animal keeping as associated with a small plot agriculture/equestrian lifestyle can be supported in perpetuity (said facilities will include where appropriate animal control facilities, holding pens in park/showing areas, etc.).

Policy 2.5.2a, The City shall maintain appropriate facilities within its animal control division, to offer support to the community for the keeping and maintenance of animals associated with a small plot agricultural lifestyle (animals in addition to horses and typical residential pets).

Policy 2.5.2b, The City will continually support and sponsor public events for the purpose of continuing education in animal husbandry.
The objective of the general animal keeping policies is to insure that facilities and resources are available for general public use to foster the development and maintenance of an animal keeping lifestyle.

Responsible Agencies: Department of Community Development and Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services.

2.5.3 GENERAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: In conjunction with the goals and policies of the Housing Element to provide equal and affordable housing to all segments of the population, the City shall insure that residential growth occurs in a responsible way consistent with the small plot agricultural lifestyle where adequate public facilities are available for the new development. (See also Housing Element)

Policy 2.5.3a. For all new development, existing and projected design capacities for affected schools shall be determined.

Policy 2.5.3b. The City will seek to maintain an on-going relationship with the school district for any proposed school construction, and to stay abreast of potential changes in school attendance boundaries.

Policy 2.5.3c. No new residential development shall be allowed until proof has been provided that school district impact fees have been paid in full, or the provision for the payment of fees has been agreed to by the school district.

Policy 2.5.3d. All new residential construction shall include the necessary infrastructure to provide services concurrent with City standards, including a lateral connection to the City's sewer system for each single lot that is developed with a home (same as Housing Element Policy 2.3.3a).

Policy 2.5.3e. Senior housing complexes shall be permitted in all zones at densities that reflect the intensity of the underlying zone. The allowable densities should be similar in intensity to surrounding developments.

2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES GOAL – THE WISE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY'S LAND RESOURCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONSERVATION ELEMENT AND THE OPEN SPACE ELEMENT.

2.6.1 LAND FORM CONSERVATION POLICY: In areas not already designated for permanent open space in the Conservation or Open Space Elements, land development should be done in such a manner so as to minimize impact to the City's primary land forms.

Policy 2.6.1a. Residential development in hillside areas needs to first accommodate a grading scenario wherein adequate lot area is provided to preserve the City's animal keeping small plot agricultural heritage, while striving to maintain as much of the natural hillside area and the form of the hillsides as possible.

Policy 2.6.1b, The City should develop a land use plan for the Beacon Hill area to determine where trail improvement needs to occur, where development should be allowed to occur, and what parts (if any) need to be acquired for permanent open space.

Policy 2.6.1c. Building construction should be restricted within 20 feet of the crest of the Norco bluffs (generally from west of Hamner Avenue eastward to the City boundary).

The objective for the environmental resources goal is to insure that development occurs consistent with the City's land form resources, preserving to the greatest extent possible the City's most identifiable natural landmarks that help give the community its sense of uniqueness; and to insure that development does not occur where people could be injured as a result of improper development. (Also see Conservation and Open Space Elements).

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development

2.7 HISTORICAL RESOURCES GOAL – PRESERVE FROM DEVELOPMENT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE CITY'S HISTORICAL AND ARCHEALOGICAL RESOURCES.

2.7.1 HISTORICAL BUILDING PRESERVATION POLICY: The City will identify and preserve the unique historical buildings that significantly identify and establish the community's history and character.

Policy 2.7.1a. Sites of significant historical, archaeological, and cultural value shall be preserved and/or incorporated into proposed new development with mitigation measures established through the environmental review process.

Policy 2.7.1b. Vegetation including street trees and public landscaping that help contribute to the City's historical fabric and identity, should be preserved and incorporated into the landscaping plans for any new development that incorporate the particular site or is adjacent to it for public improvement purposes.

Policy 2.7.1c. Rehabilitation of historical structures should be done so that the integrity of structures is not jeopardized with inappropriate additions or alterations.

Policy 2.7.1d. No demolition of any historical structure shall occur until an assessment of the cost of rehabilitation of the existing structure has been submitted to the City.

Policy 2.7.1e. Where the application of alternative building code requirements can help preserve historical buildings, the City should investigate the use of these so long as human safety is not jeopardized.

Policy 2.7.1f. Land use designations and regulations around historical structures should be conducive to the historical use of the structure so that the land value for maintaining the structure as is, is not jeopardized.

Policy 2.7.1g. Community design adjacent to historical structures shall not impede the integrity of the historical structure, either through inappropriate design, building mass, landscaping mass, setbacks, etc.

The objective of the historical preservation policy is to provide the community setting, which supports the preservation and enhancement of the City's historical buildings and sites.

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development

2.7.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURSES POLICY: The City will identify and catalogue any archaeological resources, and will take measures to preserve those resources that are considered unique and significant to the area's history.

Policy 2.7.2a. The City should collect, record, and/or mitigate archaeological resources to the level consistent with the related value of each item in terms of historical significance and importance.

Policy 2.7.2b. New development requiring discretionary approval from the Planning Commission shall be approved with a condition that requires any construction activity to stop upon discovery of archaeological resources until such time as a qualified archaeologist, retained by the property owner or developer, has investigated the site and made recommendations regarding the disposition of any items. Human remains shall not be moved until the Riverside County's Coroners Office has been notified.

The objective of the archaeological resources policy is to insure that any significant archaeological resources are preserved.

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development.

2.8 GROWTH MANAGEMENT GOAL – CONTROL GROWTH IN THE CITY SO THAT THE SMALL PLOT AGRICULTURAL/ANIMAL KEEPING LIFESTYLE REMAINS THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THE COMMUNITY.

2.8.1 ANNEXATION POLICIES: The City will only consider annexations that are conducive to the maintenance of the small plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle.

Policy 2.8.1a. The City shall not consider major amendments to the sphere of influence to include higher density areas unless the land use core of the City (existing at the time of this document) is preserved by a protective designation or legislation. The designation would need to protect historical small plot agricultural land use in its context from any future populations that could outnumber, by vote, the original small plot agricultural population of the City, and thereby have the voting power to eliminate the land use.

Policy 2.8.1b. The City shall support annexations and/or sphere of influence amendments that will add areas that, by their nature, support and enhance the City's small plot agricultural lifestyle and protect significant open space elements. Such annexations can include areas that provide a good buffer to higher density non-animal keeping neighborhoods in adjoining communities.
The objective of the annexation policies is to insure that growth of the City's land area only occurs so that the animal keeping lifestyle is maintained and supported.

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development

2.8.2 ANNEXATION/PUBLIC SERVICE POLICY: Logical annexation of adjacent unincorporated areas, including amendments to the City's sphere of influence boundary as necessary, will be encouraged when adequate service and proper land use plans have been developed, or when annexation is deemed critical to preserving the City's small plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle.

The objective of the annexation/public service policy is to facilitate the annexation of properties whose owners are conducive to annexation where City services are readily available; and for properties that will enhance the City's small plot agricultural/animal keeping lifestyle.

Responsible Agency: Department of Community Development

3.0 THE LAND USE PLAN

3.1 EXISTING SETTING

The City of Norco is approaching buildout conditions, and very little area remains in the sphere of influence where the City could annex potential large development areas. Additionally the City is physically defined by natural borders along its northwest side,

and along the eastern boundary that separate it from adjoining communities. The City's southern boundary is the City of Corona.

3.1.1 LOCAL SETTING

The City of Norco is a General Law City, incorporated on December 28, 1964 which consists of approximately 9,266 acres or 14.5 square miles, and 60.5 acres within the "sphere of influence." The dominant natural physical features of Norco are the eastern hills, the Santa Ana River, and Lake Norconian of the old Norconian Country Club, now the property of Federal and State agencies. Primary features of the built environment include the I-15 Freeway that roughly splits the City into two halves, and the former Norconian Hotel, a large and historical Spanish/Mediterranean influenced structure that now serves as a prison. The elevated points (hills and prison) are especially apparent after the City is approached from the north, through the extensive flat agricultural lands north of the Santa Ana River.

The bluffs overlooking the Santa Ana River define the northeastern to southwestern edge of the City. A north-south chain of hills defines the eastern edge. On the south the City slopes gently down into the flatter landscape of Corona.

The rural standard street system and large single-family home lot give the City an open and dispersed appearance. The numerous trees and equestrian trails add a rustic quality that is associated with the animal keeping lifestyle. The addition of hitching posts and watering troughs and the lack of sidewalks and other definitions of vehicular right-of-way help emphasize this rustic lifestyle.

The rolling hills divide the City into a number of small and discrete areas. The most dramatic of these is the Lake Norconian basin, a manmade improvement in the landscape that is primarily closed to the public now. Another "defined" area is the hillside area between Norco and Riverside, which is in various stages of development. Much of the open area in the hillside areas will be placed in development. Beacon Hill in the north central portion of the City is another major landmark. It is currently vacant with the exception of the lower slopes where some of the lots have been developed. The entire hill is zoned for commercial development.

3.1.2 REGIONAL SETTING

Norco lies approximately 50 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles. It is located on the northwest corner of Riverside County, near where Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange Counties come together.

To the north are the growing urban areas of Los Angeles and Riverside Counties which connect directly with Norco from the I-15 Freeway. Riverside City and

eastern Riverside County lie directly east and connect to Norco from State Route 91 just south of the City boundary and State Route 60 approximately five miles to the north. To the south is the City of Corona and the rapidly urbanizing area of southwestern Riverside County that connect to Norco from the I-15 Freeway.

While it is located in an urbanizing region of metropolitan Los Angeles, Norco is a unique community surrounded by agriculture, recreational, and other open lands. There are dairy and other agricultural lands north of the City but these are also in various stages of development to more urban intensities. Desert resort areas are located in eastern Riverside County, the Cleveland National Forest and the Santa Ana Mountains to the southwest, and a large flood control basin along the Santa Ana River to the west.

Freeways and public transportation directly link Norco with the metropolitan circulation network and therefore has become a place of residence for persons working in Riverside, Orange, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino Counties. The freeways bring the City within commuting distance of all four counties and within a business region that includes San Diego County further south and Ventura County further west.

3.2 MAJOR LAND USE PATTERNS

Norco, as a small plot agricultural community, does not have the range of land uses that are typical for most other cities. The focus of all land uses is the support of the small plot agricultural lifestyle that defines the community.

3.2.1 MAJOR LAND USES

There are currently 9,266 acres of land within the incorporated boundaries of Norco. While commercial agriculture is relatively limited, many residences partake in a small plot agricultural lifestyle. This is reflective in the relatively low-density atmosphere of the City. In addition, domestic commercial agriculture, including the keeping of horses and other animals, is widely practiced on many of the larger parcels.

Residential development in Norco has primarily been on lots one half acre in size and over. Such large lot residential uses now comprise almost half of the incorporated land area in Norco (46 percent). It is important to note that about twenty-five percent of that area is used for residential lots that are less than 20,000 square feet.

After the residential areas, the most extensive land use in Norco is that of the Hillside areas (HS). The Hillside area includes approximately 1361 acres or 14.7 percent of Norco's area. The Hillside area is currently under development with small plot agricultural/animal keeping residential units.

TABLE 3.1

LAND USE BY ZONING

(Acreage is approximate)

LAND USE/ZONING DESIGNATION	ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
RESIDENTIAL		
A-E (Agricultural Estate)	164	1.8
A-1-40 (Agricultural Low Density)	146	1.6
A-1-20 (Agricultural Low Density)	3,917	42.4
A-1-10 (Agricultural Low Density)	21	.23
HS	331	3.6
R-1-10 (Residential Single Family)	160	1.7
Norco Hills Specific Plan (Single Family)	282	3.0
Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan (Single Family)	444	4.8
RESIDENTIAL TOTAL	5,465	59.1
COMMERCIAL		
C-O (Commercial Office)	12	.1
C-1 (Light Commercial)	1	.01
C-2 (General Commercial)	217	2.3
C-3 (Heavy Commercial)	53	.6
C-4 (Commercial)	98	1.1
Auto Mall Specific Plan (Commercial)	55	.6
Gateway Specific Plan (Commercial)	105	1.1
Gateway Specific Plan (Office Park)	26	.3
Norco Hills Specific Plan (Commercial)	4	.04
COMMERCIAL TOTAL	571	6.2
INDUSTRIAL		
M-1 (Light Manufacturing)	163	1.8
M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing)	362	3.9
Auto Mall Specific Plan (Industrial)	19	.2
Gateway Specific Plan (Industrial)	112	1.2
INDUSTRIAL TOTAL	656	7.1
OTHER		
LD (Limited Development)	459	5.0
OS (Open Space)	885	9.6
Streets and Freeway	754	8.1
Norco Hills Specific Plan (Open Space)	1	.01
Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan (Open Space)	446	4.8
TOTAL OTHER	2,545	27.5
CITY TOTAL	9,237	

Currently, only 13.3 percent of the City's area is used for commercial and industrial activities and for such public institutions as schools and parks. Commercial establishments are generally strung in clusters along Hamner Avenue, because it has the largest volume of through traffic. The recent addition of the Gateway Center has brought over 100 acres of retail/commercial use to Norco. In addition, to the main commercial street, community retail stores are also scattered elsewhere in Norco, particularly along 6th Street.

The major non-governmental industrial use in Norco is the large Wyle Laboratories facility located in the hills in the southeastern portion of the City. Over half of Norco's land in industrial use is in the extensive weapons testing facility.

The major federal and state institutions, the Naval Ordinance Laboratory and the California Rehabilitation Center, include approximately 650 acres or 7 percent of Norco's area. The two facilities form a major physical element to be considered in planning for development in Norco. The existence of the federal and state institutions raises questions about the most compatible future land uses and development patterns to be encouraged in the northwestern part of the City.

3.2.2 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITIES

Currently there are five major approved specific plan developments that affect the physical structure within and around the City of Norco (See Exhibit 3.1). Upon buildout, each development will not only contribute to both the overall quality of life, but also have a significant effect on potential land uses for adjacent areas. The five major specific plan developments are as follows:

Gateway Specific Plan A specific plan designed around the Hidden Valley Parkway interchange with I-15 Freeway and the southern gateway to the City along Hamner Avenue, taking advantage of future community and sub-regional growth for expansion of the community's economic base (See Exhibit 3.2). The primary purpose of the Gateway Specific Plan is to facilitate private development projects, public infrastructure and roadway improvement projects that will generate positive impacts and interest in the Project Area and create a dynamic gateway entry for the City.

The Specific Plan Project Area encompasses approximately 345 gross acres and was approximately 74 percent developed in 2001. The Project Area is located within the southern most portion of the City of Norco and incorporates territory east and west of Hamner Avenue. The Project Area lies directly west of Interstate 15. Existing land uses within the Project Area include commercial, industrial, park, pasture/agriculture, quasi-public and vacant land. The Project Area is planned to be the economic nucleus of Norco (See Table 3.2).

EXHIBIT 3.1
SPECIFIC PLANS MAP

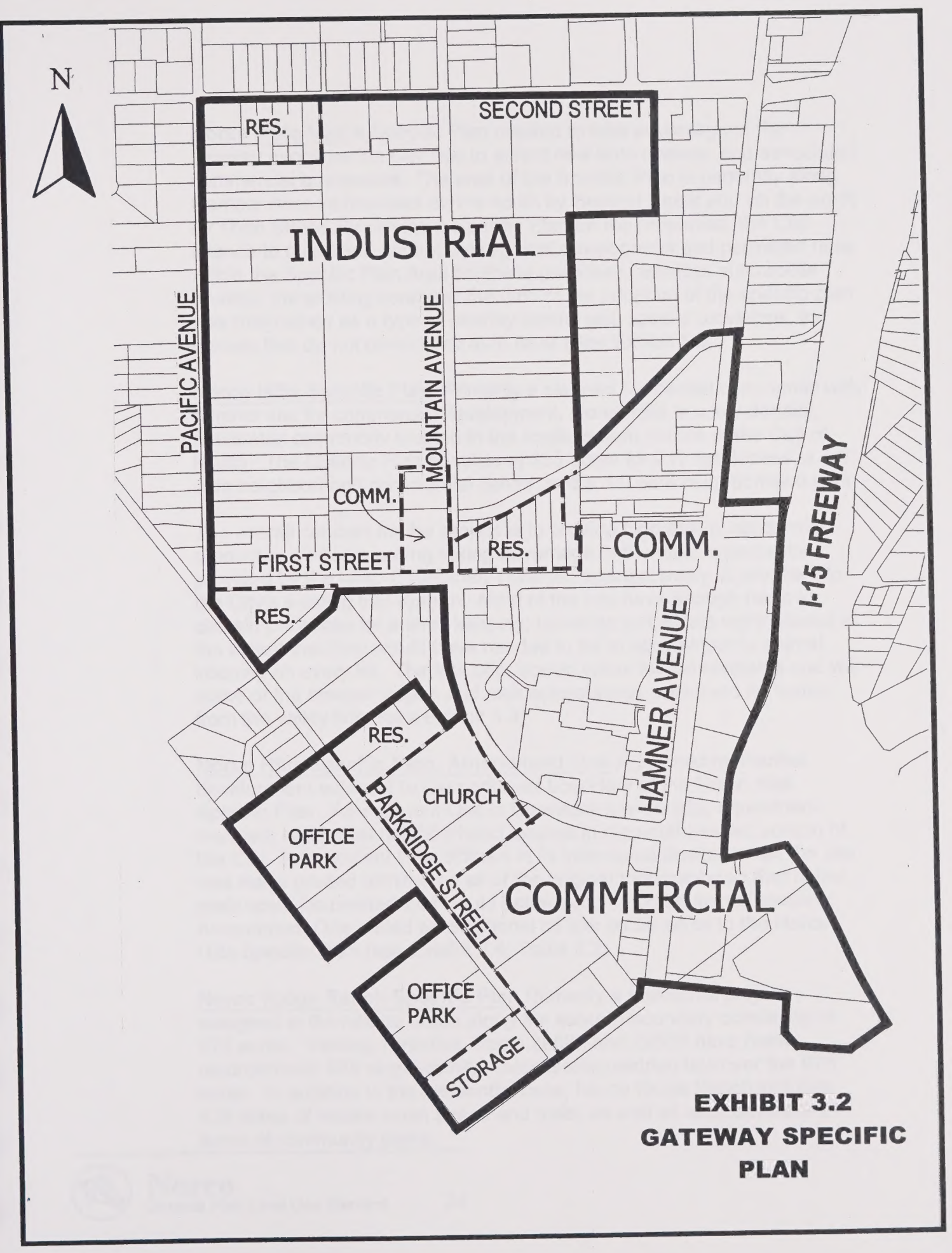


EXHIBIT 3.2
GATEWAY SPECIFIC PLAN

Norco Auto Mall A Specific Plan created to take advantage of the freeway exposure the City has to attract new auto dealers, and associated commercial businesses. The area of the Specific Plan is generally along Hamner Avenue bounded on the south by Second Street and on the north by Third Street. By placing a Specific Plan on the properties, the City intends to direct and control the physical development and permitted uses within the Specific Plan Area for these purposes. Besides automobile dealers, the existing zoning at the time of the adoption of the specific plan was maintained as a type of overlay zoning with special provisions, for parcels that do not develop as auto retail (See Exhibit 3.3).

Norco Hills Specific Plan Primarily a planned residential community with a minor site for commercial development, Norco Hills is a low-density, residential community located in the southeastern portion of the City of Norco. The Specific Plan consists of 235 acres for 217 residences, a 4.0 acre neighborhood commercial center, and a 1.0 acre neighborhood park.

The overall concept for the project is to provide high quality residential product in a hillside setting taking advantage of the view opportunities provided by the hills. Equestrian Trails will connect every lot and tie into the City's existing trail system. Most of the lots have enough room to contain paddocks for animal keeping; however, not all lots were graded to the extent that they would have needed to be to accommodate animal keeping on every lot. The lots offer scenic views for the residents and with some of the steeper slopes and rock outcroppings preserved for vistas from the valley floor (see Exhibit 3.4).

Norco Hills Specific Plan, Amendment One A planned residential development adjacent to the northeast boundary of the Norco Hills Specific Plan. Amendment One is likewise a low-density, equestrian-oriented, residential neighborhood located in the southeastern portion of the City. Amendment One differed in its intentional design in that the site was mass graded eliminating all of the original topography so that flatter pads could be created that would better accommodate animal keeping. Amendment One added an additional 88 lots on 58 acres to the Norco Hills Specific Plan (see Exhibit 3.4, Table 3.2).

Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan Primarily a residential project designed in the hillside areas along the eastern boundary consisting of 978 acres. Vesting Tentative Tracts 29588 and 29589 have been recorded with 588 single-family residential/equestrian lots over the 978 acres. In addition to the residential uses, Norco Ridge Ranch includes 425 acres of natural open space and trails, as well as approximately 21 acres of community parks.

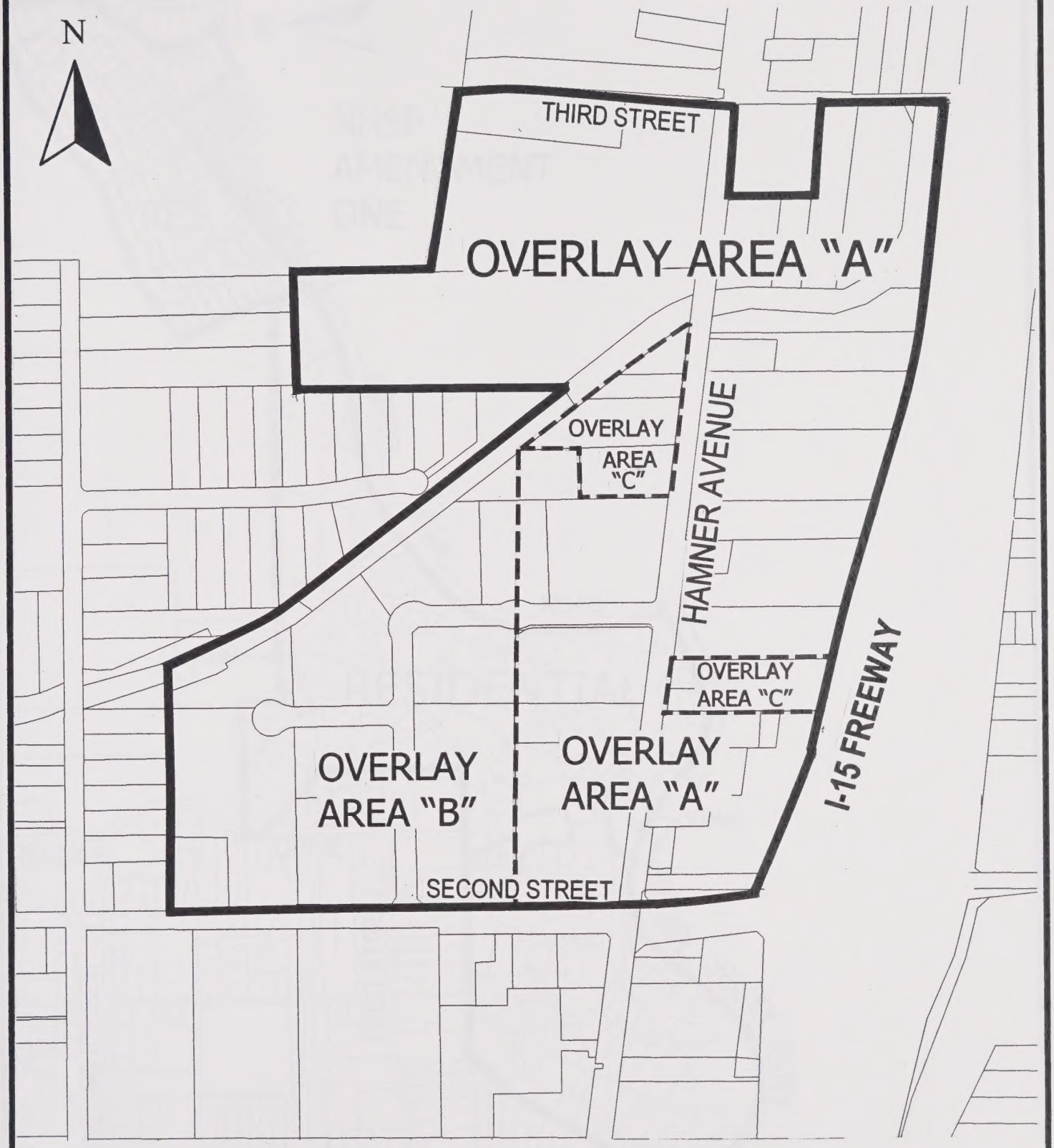


EXHIBIT 3.3
AUTO MALL
SPECIFIC PLAN

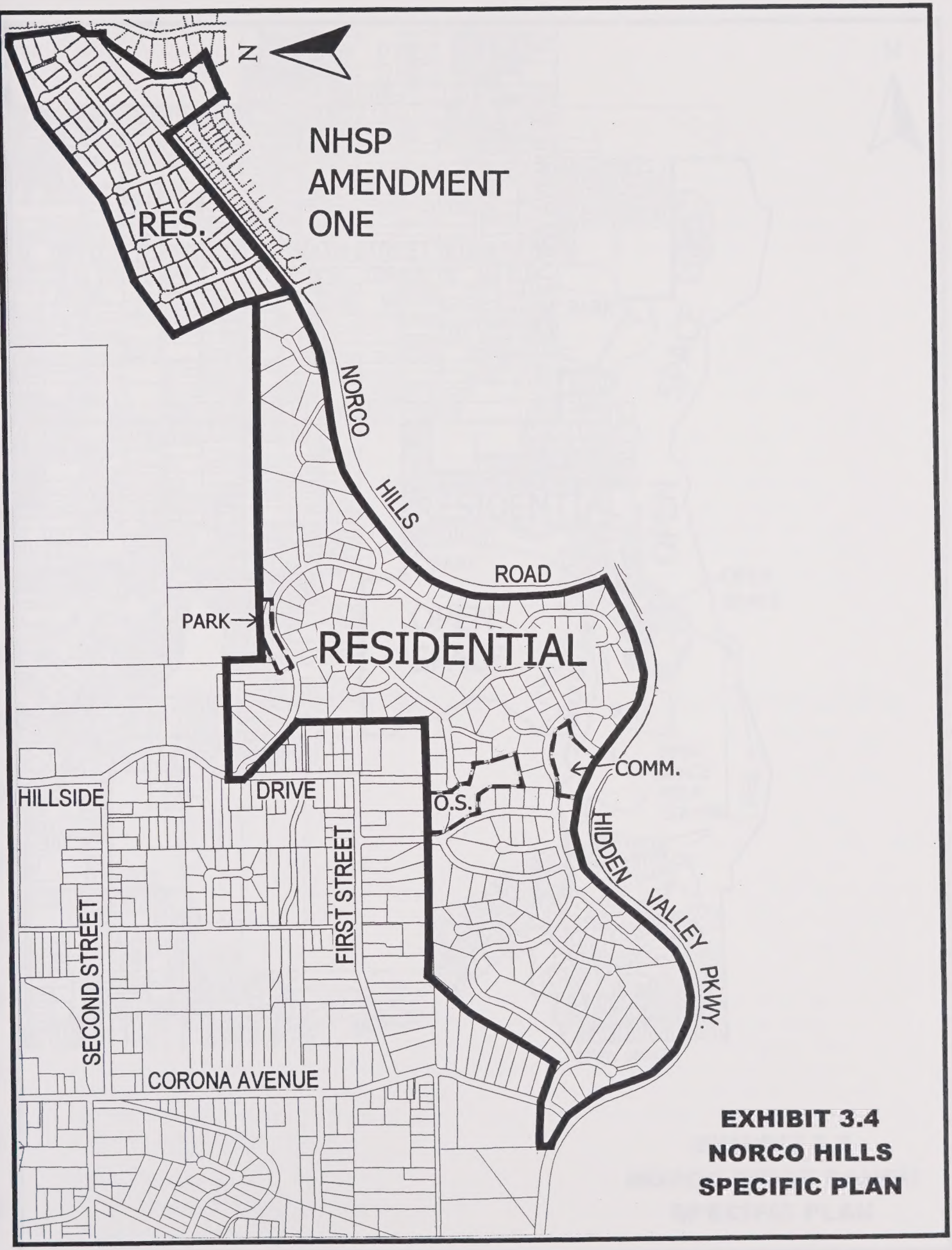


EXHIBIT 3.4
NORCO HILLS
SPECIFIC PLAN

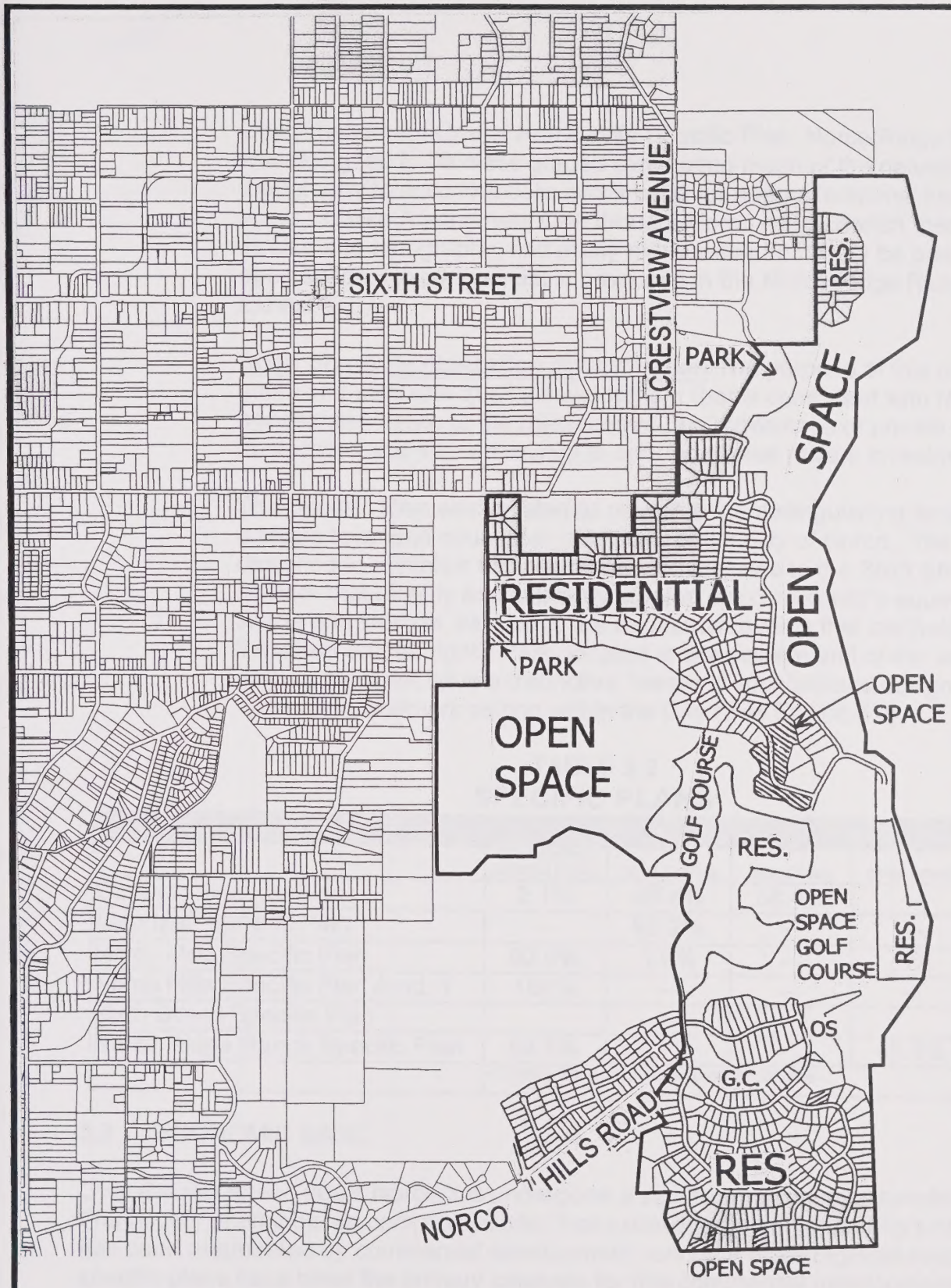


EXHIBIT 3.5
NORCO RIDGE RANCH
SPECIFIC PLAN

Like Amendment One of Norco Hills Specific Plan, Norco Ridge Ranch was designed to be mass graded eliminating much of the natural topography to accommodate larger pads for adequate animal keeping areas. Unlike Amendment One though, Norco Ridge Ranch, because of its size and topography, had many more areas that could be preserved in open space. No commercial is proposed in the Norco Ridge Ranch (See Exhibit 3.5).

Sixth Street Revitalization Specific Plan The purpose of this plan is to guide and stimulate quality development that is consistent with Norco's equestrian lifestyle to the maximum mutual advantage of private businesses and the community to spur additional private investment.

The Specific Plan was created to preserve the distinguishing small western town and equestrian character of the City of Norco. The plan is designed to revitalize and attract new businesses to the Sixth Street corridor that directly and indirectly support the community's equestrian image and lifestyle, as well as the equestrian events that are held along the street and at Ingalls Park, located at the eastern end of the street. The development will have a distinctive "western" architectural design intended to create a landmark setting within the City (See Exhibit 3.6).

TABLE 3.2
SPECIFIC PLANS

SPECIFIC PLAN	LAND USE BREAKDOWN BY %				
	RESIDENTIAL/ AGRICULTURAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	OPEN SPACE	OFFICE/OTHER
Gateway Specific Plan	2.1%	49.6%	38.4%	---	9.9%
Auto Mall Specific Plan	---	93.2%	---	---	6.8%*
Norco Hills Specific Plan	92.9%	1.6%	---	.5%	---
Norco Hills Specific Plan Amd. 1	100%	---	---	---	---
Sixth Street Specific Plan					
Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan	54.5%			45.5%	
	* Overlay Zone, also allows commercial uses				

3.3 ECONOMIC BASE

Over the last fifteen years Norco has undergone a significant economic transformation. The largely animal-based commercial core that existed for much of the City's history has been augmented by commercial development serving a more regional need. Two specific plans have been the primary catalysts for this commercial development (Auto Mall and Gateway Specific Plans, see Table 3.2 above). Commercial development and renewal has been slower to come to Sixth Street which is considered the City's historical commercial corridor.

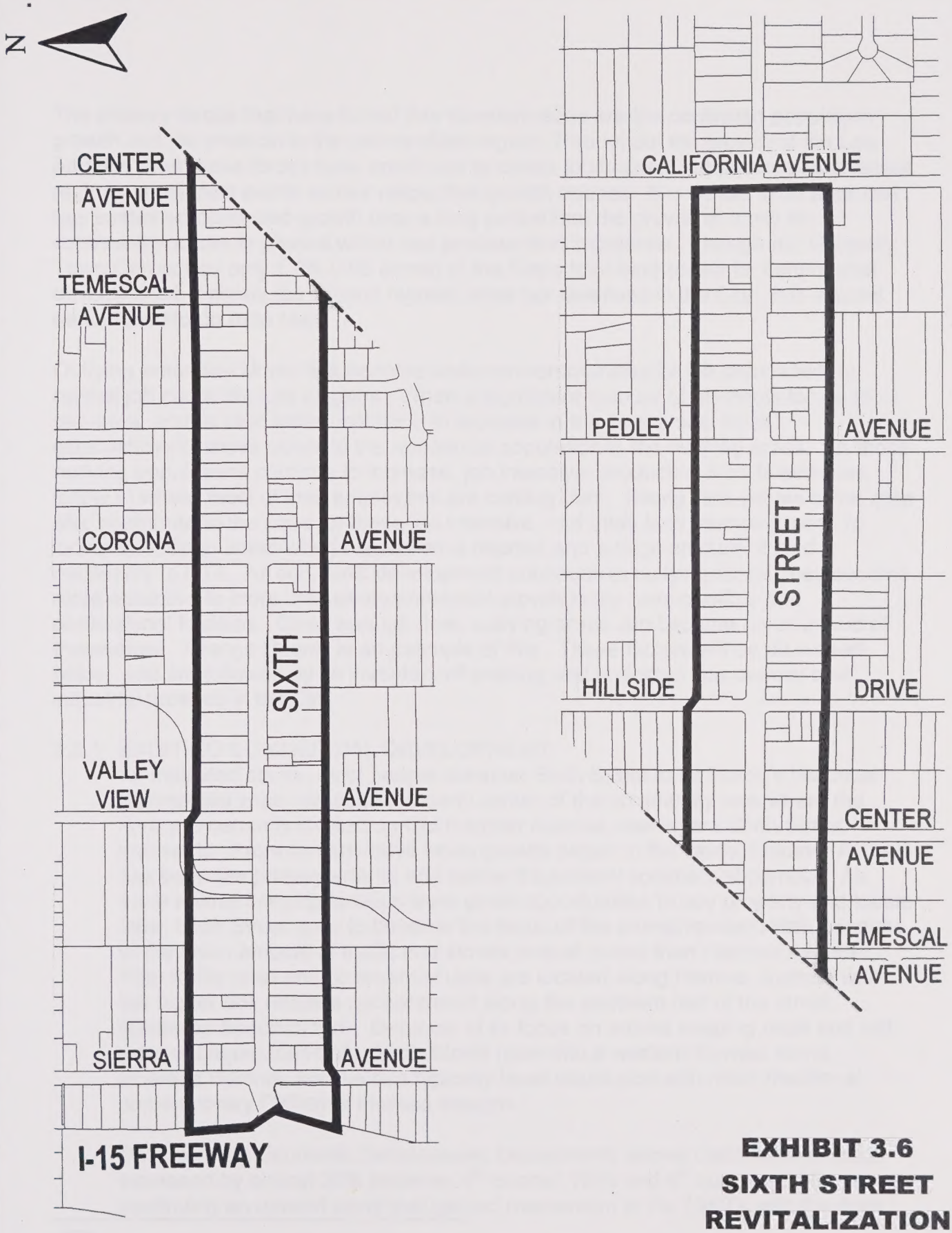


EXHIBIT 3.6
SIXTH STREET
REVITALIZATION
SPECIFIC PLAN

The primary forces that have fueled this transformation are the continued population growth and job creation in the metropolitan region. Throughout the growth of the Los Angeles area these forces have continued to create job/housing imbalances for different regions at different points in their respective growth phases. It is typical in an area that has sustained continued growth over a long period that the growth of a city or community occurs in phases which can produce that imbalance. Though the Gateway Town Center has only 1.2% (105 acres) of the City's total land zoned for commercial development, it draws the second highest sales tax revenues in the City. It is second behind the Norco Auto Mall.

Outlying areas like Norco first become bedroom communities for job commuters to central job cores like Los Angeles. When a significant number of residents locate to one area, and as land values continue to increase in the core areas, retail establishments move closer to the residential population in the outlying areas. As those outlying populations continue to increase, job intensive, production type businesses follow to where most of their employees are coming from. Rising land values in the core also contribute to the need for these job intensive, and often land intensive, uses to locate in outlying areas when expansion is needed and a large amount of land is necessary to do it. As economic development continues in outlying areas, they become more attractive to more intensive commercial growth in the form of office and professional facilities. Given enough time, outlying areas can become cores in and of themselves. Orange County is an example of this. These factors will be discussed below, and are followed by an inventory of existing and projected commercial and industrial facilities in the City.

3.3.1 EXISTING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As indicated above, most people consider Sixth Street to be Norco's historical commercial zone, although the early center of the community was where the library is currently located on Old Hamner Avenue near where Sixth Street intersects. From its early days when growth began in the valley, Hamner Avenue has been the primary arterial and hence it's primary commercial corridor. As more animal keeping families were given opportunities to buy property and locate here, Sixth Street grew to became the focus of the animal related retail, because of the lower amount of traffic and slower overall speed than Hamner Avenue. High traffic retail and commercial uses are located along Hamner Avenue with the bigger box retailers concentrated along the southern half of the street (Gateway Specific Plan). Because of its focus on animal keeping retail and with adjacent equestrian trails, Sixth Street grew into a western themed street whereas Hamner Avenue has typically been developed with more traditional contemporary California themed designs.

Data from the Economic Development Department, shows that business sales increased by almost 30% between 4th quarter 1998 and 4th quarter 1999 continuing an upward trend that gained momentum in the 1980's with the Auto

Mall and Gateway Specific Plans starting development. The most significant increases have been in building and construction which increased sales by 48.7% in that same year period. The autos and transportation businesses also had notable increases in their 4th quarter sales by 42% between 1998-1999. Table 3.3 illustrates the increase in business sales in the year from 1998-1999. Data for the year 2000 was not available at time of printing. Exhibit 3.7 shows the rise in per capita sales for Norco as compared to other jurisdictions in the region, rising from seventh to third to be only behind two other cities.

TABLE 3.3
TRENDS IN COMMERCIAL SALES (000's)

MAJOR BUSINESS GROUPS (count)	4th Qtr '99	4th Qtr '98	Change
Autos & Transportation (82)	446,768	314,230	42.20%
Building & Construction (26)	102,750	69,114	48.70%
Business & Industry (89)	44,733	41,668	7.40%
Food & Drug (19)	62,568	61,408	1.90%
Fuel & Service Stations (13)	67,115	54,285	23.60%
General Consumer Goods (152)	158,283	140,132	13.00%
Restaurants & Hotels (53)	63,737	51,609	23.50%
TOTAL ALL GROUPS (438)	945,966	732,140	29.20%

3.3.2 COMMERCIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS

A total of 571 acres (6.2%) are zoned for commercial land use in Norco (See Table 3.4). There are seven commercial land use designations. The following is a discussion of each type of land use.

Commercial Office (C-O)

This zone is intended to provide for the development of integrated office and professional areas wherein related types of uses and facilities may also be located. Uses permitted in this zone include a mixture of office uses such as financial institutions, legal services, medical, and travel services. The zone can serve as a buffer land use between heavier commercial districts and residential zones. All lots created in this zone shall contain a minimum of 13,125 square feet.

Light Commercial (C-1)

This zone is intended to provide for development of very limited neighborhood shopping areas situated adjacent to or surrounded by residential districts. Uses permitted are grocery markets, drug stores, and other service businesses. Any development in this zone should be compatible in scale and design with a residential neighborhood. The minimum lot size for new lots is 10,000 square feet.

General Commercial (C-2)
This zone is intended to provide for and encourage the orderly development of general commercial uses, with a wide variety of goods and services. The zone is designed to insure efficient and functionally related commerce for the residents of the entire City. Permits all uses in zone C-1 and additional retail uses. The minimum lot size for all new lots is 13,125 square feet.

Heavy Commercial (C-3)
This zone is intended to provide for development of intense commercial and service uses designed to serve community and regional needs. Permits all uses in the C-1 and C-2 zones, and automobile related retail, and other similar uses. Uses in this zone are those that generally are not appropriate in a General Commercial zone, but need efficient customer access and visibility from major thoroughfares. The lot area shall contain a minimum of 13,125 square feet.

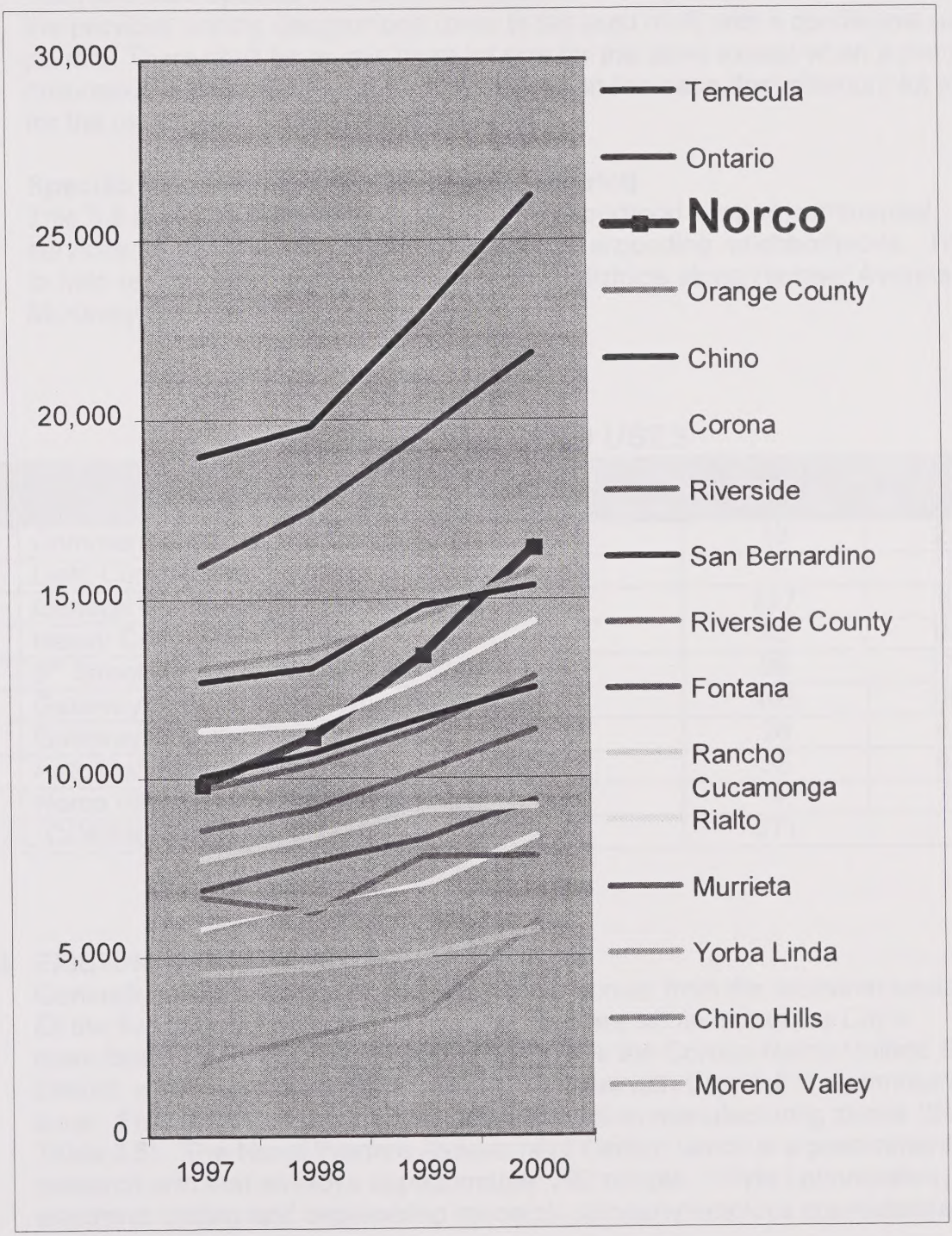
Specific Plan (Sixth Street Revitalization Specific Plan)
This specific plan, along with zoning regulations, was adopted to guide and stimulate quality development that is consistent with Norco's animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle. The uses vary to provide many opportunities for shopping, services, and employment within a context of a small town animal keeping/equestrian center. This specific plan was designed so that new development will reflect an equestrian/western design theme to preserve the City's heritage. The minimum lot size shall be 14,000 square feet.

Specific Plan (Gateway Specific Plan/Commercial District, Office District)
The Gateway Specific Plan Commercial District, because of its location adjacent to major roadways and the Second Street and Hidden Valley Parkway freeway interchanges, combined with the availability of vacant land, this area is anticipated to become the primary commercial district for Norco. Lots shall have minimum lot size of 13, 125 square feet.

Specific Plan (Gateway Specific Plan/Office Park District)
This district is intended to serve local and sub-regional office needs for executive, management, clerical, data processing, medical, and office support businesses. The minimum lot size is 13,125 square feet.

Specific Plan (Auto Mall)
A center designed for new car dealerships (both sales and service facilities) and auto-related commercial uses. The dealership sites are to be located along both sides of Hamner Avenue, north of Second Street on approximately 55 acres. The remaining acreage is within an accessory use area located west of the dealerships and south of the North Norco Flood Channel. This area is for high quality tire, battery, glass, paint, and body repair shops (See Section 3.3.4 and Table 3.6, Industrial Land Zoning Designations).

EXHIBIT 3.7
REGIONAL GROWTH IN PER CAPITA SALES



The Auto Mall Specific Plan shall also include overlay zones to allow uses from the previous zoning designations (prior to the auto mall) with a conditional use permit. There shall be no minimum lot size for this zone except when a parcel is proposed for a use within the overlay zones. In this case, the minimum lot size for the underlying overlay zone shall apply.

Specific Plan (Norco Hills Commercial District)
This 3.9 acre site is intended to provide neighborhood support commercial services for the residents of Norco Hills and surrounding neighborhoods. This is to help reduce traffic to adjacent commercial districts along Hamner Avenue and McKinley Avenue.

TABLE 3.4
COMMERCIAL LAND USES

ZONE/LAND USE DISTRICT		ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
C-O	Commercial Office	12	2.1
C-1	Light Commercial	1	.2
C-2	General Commercial	217	38
C-3	Heavy Commercial	53	9.3
SP	6th Street Revitalization Specific Plan	98	17.2
SP	Gateway Specific Plan/Commercial	105	18.4
SP	Gateway Specific Plan/Office Park	26	4.5
SP	Auto Mall Specific Plan	55	9.6
SP	Norco Hills Specific Plan/Commercial	4	.7
TOTAL COMMERCIAL ACREAGE		571	

3.3.3 EXISTING INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.
Generally, a city's largest employment base comes from the industrial sectors. Of the five largest employers in the City, four are within one of the City's manufacturing zones. The largest **employer** is the Corona-Norco Unified School District, which shares an office building complex with City Hall in a commercial zone. Five of the ten largest employers are within manufacturing zones (See Table 3.5). The Naval Warfare Assessment Center, which is a government research arm that employs approximately 702 people. Wyle Laboratories, an electronic testing and engineering research company employs approximately 150 people.

TABLE 3.5
LARGEST EMPLOYERS (YEAR 2000)

	COMPANY NAME	COMPANY DESCRIPTION	# EMP.	ZONE
1	Corona-Norco Unified School Dist.	Public school administration.	3,059	C-2
2	California Rehabilitation Center	Correctional facility.	1,200	LD
3	Naval Warfare Assessment Center	Naval weapons research.	702	LD
4	Dyncorp	Data processing.	325	M-1
5	Norco Ranch	Shell eggs and egg products.	250	SP-IND.
6	Target Stores	Department store.	210	SP-COM.
7	Wyle Laboratories	Electronic testing, engineering research	150	M-2
8	SeGi	Recreation vehicle doors and windows	150	M-1
9	Riverside Community College	Public junior college.	130	LD
10	City of Norco	City administration staff.	90	C-2

3.3.4 INDUSTRIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS.

A total of 656 acres (7.1%) are zoned for industrial land use in Norco (See Table 3.6). There are four industrial land use designations. The following is a discussion of each type of land use.

Heavy Commercial/Light Manufacturing (M-1)
This zone is intended to provide orderly development of heavy commercial and light manufacturing uses in harmony with each other and the rest of the community, so as to minimize undesirable affects such as heavy traffic and noise on other land uses. The zone is designed for mostly non-retail uses even though provision has been made for the limited inclusion of some related retail uses. The minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet.

Some existing M-1 Zoning along Hamner Avenue will need to be changed to more appropriate commercial designations given the fact that the M-1 Zone has recently been changed. Previously, the M-1 Zone was an all-inclusive zone at the top of a hierarchical commercial scale wherein all of the uses permitted in the commercial zones, were also permitted in the M-1 Zone. Those commercial uses have primarily been eliminated necessitating the need for more accommodating zoning for some of the properties along Hamner Avenue.
Heavy Manufacturing (M-2)

This zone is intended for the orderly development of manufacturing, research and development, wholesale and distribution, warehousing, and other compatible uses within the community. The provisions are designed to provide adequate space to protect adjacent land uses from inharmonious impacts and conflicts. Only one area in the City is zoned M-2, and it corresponds to one user (Wyle Laboratories) that existed when the City incorporated. It is anticipated that the 362 acres will convert to residential if and when Wyle Laboratories vacates the site. No other property in the City will be zoned M-2.

Specific Plan (Gateway Specific Plan/Industrial District)
The Industrial designation allows heavy commercial, light industrial, research and development, and office uses. Permitted industrial uses include light manufacturing, custom manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, and wholesaling. This portion of the specific plan also includes many commercial uses that are also permitted in the commercial district of the specific plan. Permitted office uses are those necessary to support the administrative functions of the primary permitted uses. This industrial classification closely resembles a modified compilation of the City's existing C-2, C-3, and M-1 zoning designations.

TABLE 3.6
INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

ZONE/LAND USE DISTRICT		ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
M-1	Light Manufacturing	163	1.8
M-2	Heavy Manufacturing	362	3.9
SP	Auto Mall Specific Plan/Industrial overlay	19	.2
SP	Gateway Specific Plan/Industrial	112	1.2
TOTAL INDUSTRIAL ACREAGE		656	

3.3.5 REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment uses a municipality's police and corporate powers to provide incentives and resources to spur development in blighted areas. As an aid to property owners it is one of the most powerful tools available to local governments. Where the private sector is unable to or unwilling to assemble land and invest the necessary capital for revitalizing blighted areas, redevelopment is a means of focusing community resources to transform deteriorating or underutilized areas to more productive use. Under California Community Redevelopment Law, redevelopment agencies, in carrying out a redevelopment program, are empowered to buy and move structures, provide

public improvements in support of development activities in a "Project Area," or assist the private sector in financing the preceding activities.

The law provides that a redevelopment agency may obtain financing from any legal source. One common practice of redevelopment agencies is the use of tax increment financing as a primary source of funding. Under this method, the assessed value of property in the project area is frozen at the time a project is identified, and the project area is formed. The increased margin, or increment, of tax revenues resulting from subsequent improvement pays the project's costs instead of being turned over to the tax agencies. This usually lasts about 30 years or until the project is paid for.

In addition to using tax increment financing, the agency may accept loans or grants from agencies of the federal and state governments, or any other public agency. Another major source for redevelopment has been the federal Community Development Block Grant Program.

The Norco Redevelopment Project Area comprises a large area in the City. It generally covers the entire City with the exception of Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan and Wyle Labs; and the neighborhoods generally along Norco Drive/Corydon Avenue between Hamner Avenue and the western City boundary. The Norco Redevelopment Agency oversees all redevelopment projects and programs within the project area.

The Community Redevelopment Agency Five Year Implementation Plan, during the 2000-2005 period, indicates that the City plans to attract and complete several redevelopment projects within the Sixth Street Revitalization Specific Plan (Old Town Target Area) and industrial and commercial sites in the Gateway Target Area, Auto Mall and the Hamner Business District Area.

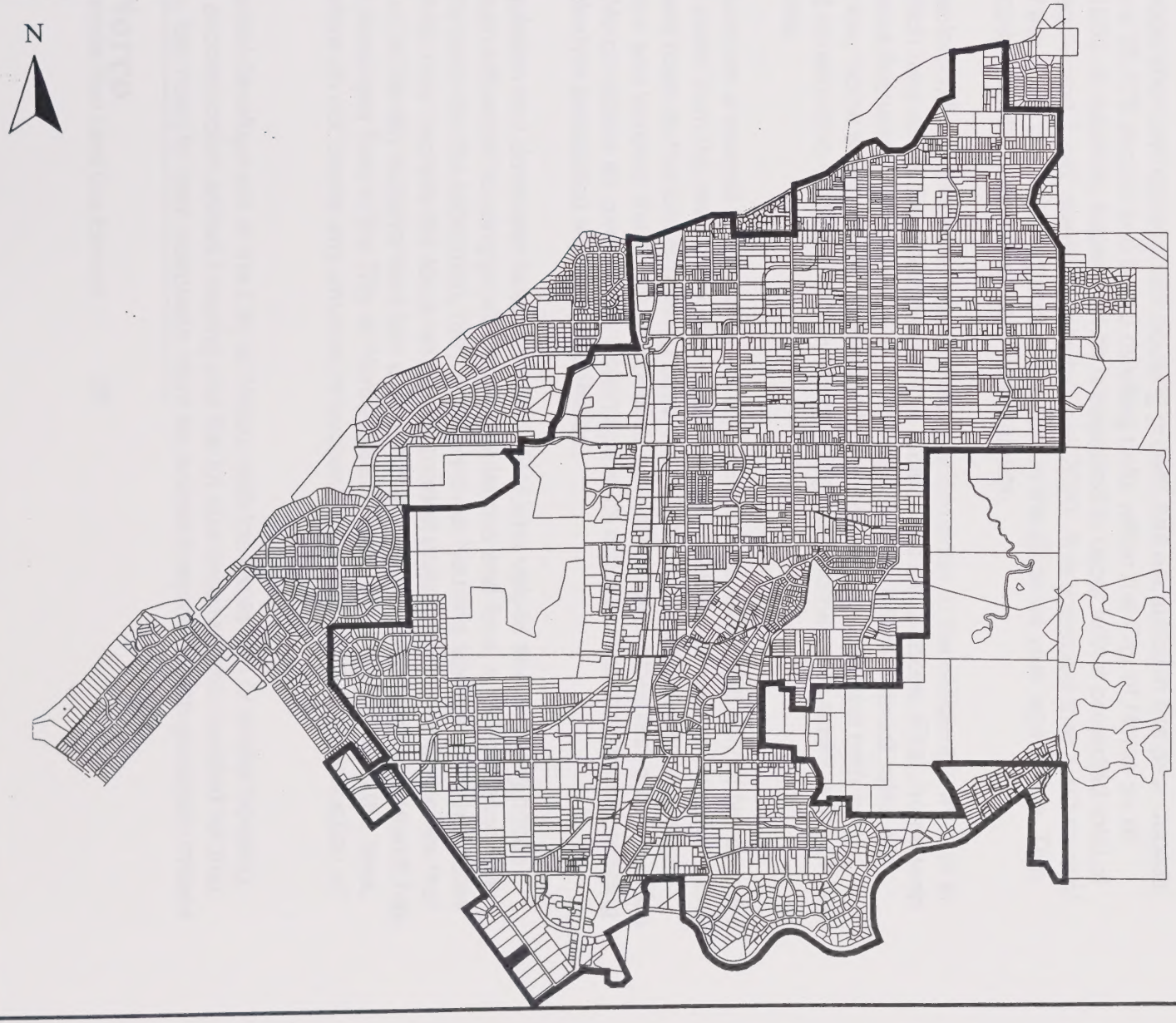


EXHIBIT 3.8
REDEVELOPMENT
PROJECT AREA

3.4 RESIDENTIAL BASE

One of the first indications of a community's desirability as a place to live and do business is reflected in the nature and availability of its housing stock. The overall quality of housing, its general appearance, the range and availability of housing for single persons, families, and retired persons, as well as the range and availability for both workers and executives, are all significant elements of the decision-making process affecting individuals, businesses, and industrial firms which may consider Norco as a location. Norco with its unique lifestyle offers another incentive not generally available in other communities.

Norco's population and consequent housing growth has escalated in the past decade. There were 25,476 people and 6,116 dwelling units within the City of Norco as of January 1999. In addition, future growth is expected to occur with a projected total of 30,005 people and 7,442 dwelling units by year 2020. It is expected that a substantial portion of the City's population growth will occur in the 22 to 44 year age group. This group accounts for the majority of new homebuyers.

Several factors will moderate the year to year performance of the residential market in Norco, which may affect the realization of the projections cited above. First, home loan interest rates fluctuate, and are not subject to local control. When interest rates are relatively low, home sales are accelerated. Higher interest rates impact both home loans and construction lending, thereby dampening both home sales and the production of new units.

Land Values are a second factor. In the recent past, land costs in the City of Norco were markedly lower than the rest of the urbanized Southern California region. However, land values have risen as the City is nearing build-out, which in turn has increased home sales prices and tempers the City's competitive advantage over other fast-growing cities nearby. Norco retains its competitive advantage in its effort to preserve animal keeping and the lifestyle associated with those activities.

Local regulation and developer fees can also affect land values and housing prices, which in turn influence housing production. Regulations and fees, which substantially exceed the norm for the subregion, may lead to slower housing starts and higher sales prices, which may depress the local residential market unless the public perceives that the product is thereby superior and can afford to purchase it. Comparative research has indicated developer fees in the City of Norco are similar to other agencies in the area, and therefore do not create any unusual or excessive constraints to the production of housing.

All residential development in the City of Norco, with the exception of senior housing, needs to accommodate animal keeping and the lot size requirements needed for that. Minimally, lots need to have adequate room for animal keeping, which generally means

large, deep rear yards where animals can be accommodated with as little impact as possible to nearby residences; and which also provides appropriate room for the health and safety of the animals. Also important is the ability to provide trailer access to the rear yard. Sixty percent of the City is zoned for residential development with most of that acreage in Agricultural Low Density designations.

3.4.1. EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

By the time of its incorporation, the land use trend for animal keeping in Norco was well established. Norco's residential land use is comprised of predominantly single family residential development, at an overall average of approximately two dwelling units per acre. Most of the housing stock has been built since 1960; 63% of the existing housing supply is between 20 and 40 years old.

3.4.2 RESIDENTIAL ZONING DESIGNATIONS

The land use analysis (Table 3.1) shows that the majority of the City (5,465 acres) is devoted to residential land use. The following is the various land use designations for the residential zones.

Agricultural Estate (A-E)

This zone is intended to provide and encourage the development of agricultural estate areas, designed to take advantage of the outdoor recreation potential of the community. This zone is primarily located along the Santa Ana River where significant open space recreational land uses are located. Permitted uses include single-family detached dwellings, public parks and playgrounds, nurseries, greenhouses, orchards, and the keeping and maintaining of horses and other animals. All lots in this zone shall contain a minimum lot area of at least 40,000 square feet, and one home on one legal lot at a maximum density of one dwelling unit per acre.

Agricultural Low-Density (A-1)

This zone is intended to provide and encourage development of agriculturally oriented low-density living areas designed to take advantage of the the outdoor recreation potential of the community on smaller lots. This is the primary residential zone of the City. Lots in this zone have access to recreational open space areas, but are not necessarily adjacent to them. All lots within this zone shall contain a minimum lot area as prescribed by suffix applicable thereto (A-1-10, A-1-20, A-1-40); provided that there shall be at least 20,000 square feet in all lots hereafter created, and no lot in this zone shall be reduced below this minimum. This zone permits a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre.

Residential Single-Family (R-1)

This zone is intended to provide for the development of single-family residential areas and to designate appropriately located areas for single family living at a higher density. The provisions of this zone are intended to insure that the

residential character of such areas will be stabilized and maintained. They are further intended to provide a basis for planning of related amenities such as parks, schools, public utilities, streets and highways, and other community facilities.

This zone corresponds with neighborhoods that had already started being developed at a higher density than animal keeping neighborhoods when the City incorporated. No lots in the R-1 Zone are allowed to keep large animals with the exception of those lots that are over 20,000 s.f. All lots within this zone shall contain a minimum lot area as prescribed by the suffix applicable thereto (R-1-10, R-1-15, R-1-20); provided that there shall be at least 10,000 square feet in all lots hereafter created, and no lot in this zone shall be reduced below this minimum. The maximum density in this zone is four dwelling units per acre. No additional R-1 Zones should be created than what exist at the printing of this document.

Hillside (HS)
The hillside zone is intended to provide for the development of agricultural and low-density residential uses in a safe, orderly, and aesthetically appealing manner in hillside areas, by establishing as more comprehensive review procedure and flexibility in development standards to accommodate the varied conditions of the hillside areas. It is intended to ensure that hillside areas are developed in a manner that will recognize the unique character and problems of hillside development. Each newly created lot shall have a minimum of 20,000 square feet, with a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre.

The HS Zone is a "temporary" zone in that development cannot occur until a specific plan has been approved for areas that need to be subdivided or have grading in excess 25,000 cubic yards. Once a specific plan is approved it replaces the HS Zoning designation. One key difference in the HS Zone is that it allows for clustering of units (no lots smaller than 20,000 s.f.) to help preserve open space in hillside areas. There is a reference in the HS Zone that the intent is to minimize mass grading. Recent approvals in areas previously zoned HS has shown that to accommodate animal keeping in hillside lots, mass grading has to be permitted. The Zoning Code needs to be amended appropriately.

Specific Plan (Norco Hills Specific Plan, Residential District)
The residential district of the Norco Hills Specific Plan occupies 92.9 percent of the specific plan area. The intent was to provide a low intensity land use, in order to restore and preserve the beauty of the hills. Originally the project was to be custom lot development with minimum grading. The specific plan was approved in 1991, however, development did not occur until ten years later. Ultimately the project was developed as one phased project. Some of the grading was eliminated at the expense of animal keeping potential on some lots.

Controversy over the loss of some of the animal keeping set that stage for future projects in the HS Zone to accommodate more grading to achieve larger level pad sizes for animal keeping. The specific plan approved 217 residential lots with a minimum lot size of 20,000 s.f.

Specific Plan (Norco Hills Specific Plan [NHSP], Amendment 1)
This specific plan was proposed as an amendment to NHSP being located adjacent on the northeast edge of NHSP. The overall project concept of Amendment 1 is to provide high quality residential product consistent with that standards of NHSP, but with increased pad sizes to accommodate more animal keeping. The amount of animal units allowed reflects the standard allowance in the City's A-1 rather than the reduced rate in NHSP. The project site for Amendment 1 was entirely graded whereas some of the natural slopes in NHSP were not graded. Amendment 1 added 58 acres to NHSP and an additional 82 single-family homes.

Specific Plan (Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan [NRRSP])
The NRRSP was designed specifically to be an equestrian oriented, animal keeping hillside community along the ridgeline that divides the cities of Norco and Riverside. The intent of the specific plan was to provide lots specifically designed for animal keeping using innovative lot, equestrian trail, and layout design to preserve significant natural features, and identified wildlife habitat, while still providing adequate area on every lot to support animal keeping. The entire project site consists of 978 acres, of which 444 acres are planned for residential development. Residential development is the only other land use in the specific plan besides open space and park areas. The minimum lot size is 20,000 s.f. to allow clustering of lots to preserve large amounts of common open space. The specific plan will eventually have 588 single-family, animal keeping homes.

Specific Plan (Gateway Specific Plan, Residential District)
The Gateway Specific Plan is primarily commercial and industrial in its land use; however, it did include 4.7 acres for new single-family residential development. Only two vacant lots in the specific plan were designated for residential development primarily to coincide with existing residences. The specific plan incorporated approximately 14 acres of existing residential development into the plan to be maintained as such. In addition, the specific plan surrounds on three sides and existing residential neighborhood along Three Bar Lane. Residential zoning was placed adjacent to this neighborhood for maintenance and enhancement of that neighborhood. Any residential development is subject to the underlying zoning requirements (A-1-20 Zone).

Senior Housing

The Land Use Element does not contain any high density residential zones that are generally required for the development of senior housing complexes. The Zoning Code does allow for the development of senior housing in any zone upon approval of a conditional use permit. Density is determined based on the underlying zoning designation. High density projects are only be permitted in commercial zones. Senior housing is also allowed in residential zones, but must be compatible to the underlying and surrounding low density.

TABLE 3.7
RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

ZONE/LAND USE DISTRICT		ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
A-E	Agricultural Estate	164	3.0
A-1	Agricultural Low Density	4,084	74.7
R-1	Residential Single-Family	160	2.9
HS	Hillside	327	6.0
SP	Norco Hills Specific Plan/Residential	282	5.2
SP	Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan	444	8.1
SP	Gateway Specific Plan/Residential	4	.07
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL ACREAGE		5,465	

3.4.3 FUTURE RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

As indicated in Section 2.1.2 the City of Norco is nearing buildout conditions in its residentially zoned areas and there is little area in the City's sphere of influence for future annexation. The only vacant land falls within two categories, large pieces of property that can still be subdivided for development of planned residential neighborhoods, and small vacant or underdeveloped parcels within existing residential areas that are still unused or can accommodate more housing units. The Housing Element identifies parcels that are vacant or underutilized for the development of more housing units and gives projected housing development to the year 2025 when buildout of large vacant parcels is anticipated. Buildout may occur as early as 2015 depending on market conditions and continuation of current growth trends.

3.4.4 LAND USE PRESERVATION

Land use resources generally refer to agriculturally productive land. Agricultural lands are a vital economic, open space and environmental resource for jurisdictions where they occur. There are no prime agricultural lands in the City of Norco as determined by the State Department of Conservation. The City is, however, based on a small plot agricultural land use that is more historical in its

practice and generally not found anymore in an agricultural industry made up primarily of modern large scale agri-businesses.

The General Plan envisions the small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian land use as a permanent part of the City's overall land use pattern. That land use has helped shaped an important part of the City's history and identity. In addition to the family economic benefits of a small plot agricultural land use, it can provide indirect benefits of enhanced air quality, reduced congestion, and heightened community aesthetics. Many residences in Norco practice small plot agriculture and/or an animal keeping/equestrian lifestyle and the City strives to preserve, encourage and assist the retention of that land use. The City should investigate the possibility of obtaining an "historical" designation for the City's small plot agriculture/animal keeping/equestrian land use core that would prohibit a change from that land use, perhaps opening the door for future annexations in areas that have greater population densities and that are not now within the Sphere of Influence.

3.5 PUBLIC LAND USES

The State provides for open space by mandating comprehensive planning for open space by local governments, and by granting express authority for open space implementation and financing mechanisms, including open space maintenance districts, open-space easements and mandatory dedications/in-lieu fees for parks and recreational open space. The City's wealth of parks and open space areas provide evidence of the high value that the City also places on open space. According to the Urban Land's Institute's research team report, a fairly large percentage (9.6%) of the City's acreage is presently open space. However, the prevalent open space surrounding the City that is attractive to new residents in and around Norco is primarily privately owned. Much of it is expected to disappear in the next ten years in the face of urban expansion eastward from Los Angeles County.

Because of its unique setting and lifestyle the City has a functional system of open space areas. Generally open space as a land use is used to preserve areas of significant biological resources, or areas of significant cultural and aesthetic value to the community. Open space can either be passive or active. With the Santa Ana River on one boundary and the Norco Hills on another, the City has a great opportunity to preserve elements that identify the community, and also provide useable recreational resources. The City maintains an extensive system of parks to meet the needs of its citizens, ranging from public equestrian facilities and open space to lighted ball fields. The City's Parks and Recreation Department oversees 429.78 acres. Some of these are active park facilities while some are open space areas to preserve significant natural elements of the community.

3.5.1 OPEN SPACE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF RESOURCES

Open space lands for the preservation of resources are those lands, which possess significant natural or man-made value. A substantial portion of the City's open space consists of such lands. The Santa Ana River and bluffs area typifies the type of open space for natural resources. As a primarily open corridor the river and associated waterway provides habitat to some sensitive species including the willow flycatcher, arroyo chub, least Bell's vireo, the coast range newt, the yellow-breasted chat, and the Santa Ana sucker. These species have not been found in or adjacent to the City of Norco, but are known to occur along the Santa Ana River.

The only sensitive species that has been identified in the Norco Hills is the Stephen's kangaroo rat. The City of Norco is not within the historical habitat area of this species, and therefore the City was not part of the original habitat impact mitigation/conservation plan. Development in the hills has required the developer to obtain their own "Section 10A Permit" from the United States Department of Fish and Game (USF&G). In a response from USF&G to that proposed development in the hillside areas, the conclusion of USF&G was that the Norco Hills do not support enough habitat to permanently sustain a population of Stephen's kangaroo rats.

Significant man-made resources include areas that contain significant archeological or historical aspects of the City's past. There are no known significant archeological resources within City limits; and historical resources are limited. One significant historical resource is the former Hotel Norconian that now serves as the California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Since the building is owned and operated by a State agency, the City does not have authority over its use. The CRC, however, uses inmates to keep the building maintained in its historical form, and restores features as time and money allow. The facility is open to the public for limited tours and meals in the historical ballroom. Two other historical sites are the first schoolhouse at 3900 Acacia Avenue and an original store at 3954 Old Hamner Avenue, neither of which are listed nationally but have significance to Norco. Both are being maintained in their historical context as public buildings (community center and library respectively).

The Conservation Element outlines in detail the habitat and wildlife resources that are protected, or need to be protected, in open space resources.

3.5.2 OPEN SPACE FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

Public parks and recreation areas are an important and necessary element of the urban community, meeting many of its residents' needs for leisure activities. They also serve as major aesthetic amenities, which help to give character and

form to the physical environment. Major open spaces can serve as gateways, helping to visually define the scope of the City.

The City of Norco has, or is in close proximity, to approximately 15 outdoor recreation parks. Rivertrails Park is the largest city park (277 acres) and is located in the northeastern portion of the City. The park is owned and operated by the City of Norco and supplements other riverbottom preserves that are administered by the County and the State. In addition to Rivertrails Park, Ingalls Park provides premier equestrian facilities for the citizens of Norco and for major events. Nestled in the foothills of the Norco Hills, Ingalls Park has become a symbol representing the City's animal keeping character.

Because of some large park facilities (Rivertrails and Ingalls) Norco has a high ratio of park acreage compared with other cities. These two large parks, however, do not provide active ballfield and playground areas. Portions of the City currently lack in having that type of active park facility nearby. A new sports park at Ingalls Park along with a future park to be constructed in the Wyle labs area will provide some of these needed facilities.

In addition to open space, the City has significant areas that are designated Limited Development because of the unique nature of the land use involved. 459 acres in the City are designated LD (Limited Development)). This designation includes school sites, the California Correction Center, Naval Warfare Assessment Center, and the Norco campus of Riverside Community College. All of these facilities are maintained by other government entities, or by the Corona-Norco Unified School District. The City primarily does not have input on the construction of facilities for these land uses. Table 3.8 shows the various land use zones that are either maintained as public facilities, or are areas where the City does not have primary authority on approval of new construction.

TABLE 3.8
PUBLIC USES/OPEN SPACE/
LIMITED DEVELOPMENT

ZONE/LAND USE DISTRICT		ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
OS	Open Space	785	30.9
OS	Open Space (Riverside Community College)	100	3.9
LD	Limited Development	459	18.0
SP	Norco Hills Specific Plan/Open Space	1	.1
SP	Norco Ridge Ranch Specific Plan/Open Space	446	17.5
	Streets and freeway	754	29.6
TOTAL PUBLIC USE/OPEN SPACE ACREAGE		2,545	

3.6 COMMUNITY DESIGN

The purpose of the Community Design Section is to direct development towards a goal that unifies the community through design cohesion between the natural and the built environment. One part of the equation is the physical setting of the City and the features of the landform that define it. The other is how the built environment relates to these features, and then the inter-relationships of the different elements of the built environment. It is also important that certain individual neighborhoods maintain a uniqueness that sets them apart from other neighborhoods, but still weaves them into an overall statement of the community. By doing so, residents and/or businesses take a particular pride of location, with the corresponding individual responsibility to maintain that neighborhood to the betterment of the entire community.

3.6.1 LANDMARKS AND COMMUNITY FOCAL POINTS

As has already been described in Section 2.1.4, the City of Norco has significant landforms with which to identify the community. These occur both at the community level, and at a regional level such as the San Gabriel, San Bernardino and Santa Ana Mountains. While the Santa Ana River does not provide the same broad vista from many points of the community like the mountains do, it provides a significant site level focal point for the community that can help contribute to a general good feeling overall about the city. In conjunction with the natural environment, the built environment plays a key role in establishing a general "feel" for a city.

3.6.2 VISUAL CORRIDORS/VISTA POINTS

Key to vista points is the ability to view them. The mountains are generally viewed from most points in the City; and for most people this occurs from the car as they travel the City's streets. Some streets because of their grade, elevation, and orientation provide better opportunities for viewsheds. For streets that have nice viewsheds, the City should adopt street tree planting standards that does not detract from this resource.

3.6.3 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

As an equestrian community, the City of Norco already has design and function features that set its neighborhoods apart from adjacent communities in the form of the extensive trail system. The City has been on a multi-year program to install equestrian trail fencing alongside all trails in the City. This program should continue until all trails have fencing. This is significant design feature that unifies the uniqueness of the community and defines where the trails are actually located. In addition to trail fencing, the City should take all opportunities to obtain grants, and to appropriate City funds as they can be available, for the planting of street and trail trees. These, along with the trail fencing, help define the small town image of the streets and neighborhoods. Outside of the trails and trees,

most neighborhoods do not have unique features that set them apart from other neighborhoods in the City. The one exception would be planned communities that have specific themed entry points.

Undeveloped residential property and/or future residential property should incorporate more western style ranch themes in the design of homes, specially in the eastern portion of the City where the only large tracts of land are still available. This style consists of mostly one-story structures, wood facing, and bungalow style ornamentation on roofs, eaves, porches, and windows. Large porches, multi-paned windows, and gabled window roofs also accentuate this style.

3.6.4 COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN

Commercial neighborhoods, because of their visibility provide great opportunities for the City to showcase itself, and for individual neighborhoods to set apart their own identity. The most obvious of these is the Sixth Street Old Town District. As indicated earlier, this street is the primary focus for equestrian and animal keeping retail in the City, and as such has a distinct small-town western feel to it (Section 3.3.2). In addition to the standards contained in that document, the City and property owners should work together to locate outdoor art that can support and encourage the equestrian theme. Street trees should be planted and properly maintained to help better establish the western small-town atmosphere. The City should also continue efforts to get regional road and bridge improvements, specifically an additional bridge over the Santa Ana River in the vicinity of Arlington Avenue (western Riverside) to take some of the commuter traffic off of Sixth Street.

Other commercial districts are not as uniquely identified in terms of architectural style or theme. They are more a function of use (i.e. The Auto Mall). Most of the recent architecture on Hamner Avenue has been typical California contemporary with little features other than sign ornaments to identify their location in Norco, or in a specific area. There has been increasing public sentiment for western-themed architecture. On infill pads in relatively built-out centers, western-styled buildings would appear "out-of-place" in a center that is primarily contemporary in its design. An "authentic" western look that is achievable in a district like Sixth Street, is probably no longer achievable in some other commercial districts.

One commercial "district:" in the community that will require some direction is the section of Hamner Avenue between the Auto Mall on the South and Sixth Street on the north. This is a commercial corridor characterized by old and new development, and various styles of architecture. On the northern portion of the street where the commercial district of the City transitions from Hamner Avenue to Sixth Street, there is a lot of vacant property with high visibility from the freeway and from Sixth Street across the freeway. Western themed architecture

here could be appropriate given the proximity and visibility to Sixth Street. It also would help accentuate the western theme on Sixth Street by establishing the same design around all four freeway interchanges. It would also help tie Sixth Street into the overall community commercial district, which is primarily focused on Hamner Avenue.

For the remaining portions of Hamner Avenue down to the Auto Mall, the lots are mostly developed and in various stages of maintenance, with many varied styles of architecture. Some are no more than a box. This provides a good opportunity to transition between two different styles of architecture: on the south end of Hamner Avenue (Gateway, Auto Mall) and Sixth Street on the north. This area would also be a good place for the City to implement public art programs that reflect the western lifestyle. Given that new buildings have been constructed with the same mixture of styles as the older buildings, a set theme would take a long time to get established. This could be an appropriate area to allow a mixture of styles for variety, and to tie all the different aspects of the retail community together along Hamner Avenue. The City should, however, set strong architectural standards to insure that quality design ensues, rather than the easiest and cheapest to design and build.

The small commercial district between the Auto Mall and the Gateway Specific Plan has the same problem. Both the Auto Mall and the Gateway area have been developed with a modern California contemporary architecture, while there are strong elements of a western theme along Hamner Avenue between the two districts. There are also some elements of a southwest style. This might also be an appropriate area to encourage a mixture of styles, but with architectural controls to ensure good design, and with requirements that strong elements of good adjacent architecture be incorporated to provide design transition between parcels.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

4.1 PROJECT REVIEW/PERMITTING PROCESS

The entitlement process allows for ample opportunity to insure that proposed development is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, and compatible and complimentary to existing development, and to neighborhoods. Site design is important to the functionality of a development and contributes to the overall "feeling" that one leaves with, but it is architecture that provides the enduring image to everyone passing by on the street. It is important that precise architectural standards be expressed early in the project review process. The Planning Commission also serves in their capacity as the architectural review board for the City.

After project review and approval, the building permit process insures that development not only meets standard safety provisions, but also is consistent with the project as approved in terms of compatibility of the land use in the context of its site and the neighboring sites.

4.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Capital Improvement Program is a revolving five-year plan for the expenditure of City funds for public improvement projects. The first year list are those projects to be funded in the next fiscal year, which will then be replaced with those projects listed as the "second year". Trail fencing and trail maintenance receives an annual allotment, as well as various street and other public safety projects. The City should continue to fund trail improvements as part of the overall land use implementation as this has become a lasting recognizable feature of the City. Other public projects that celebrate and increase the awareness of the uniqueness of Norco's lifestyle, such as public art and parkway tree planting, should also be considered when funds are available.

4.3 GRANT COORDINATION

State and Federal grants represent another opportunity for the City to further its efforts to implement the goals and objectives of the Land Use Element as they pertain to community identity. Several grants for the last few years have been offered for the purpose of increasing urban forestry throughout California. The City has been successful in obtaining some of these funds and should continue to pursue them, as they become available. Another major recent improvement, the Norco bluffs stabilization and riverside trail improvements, was facilitated by a federal grant. The Corydon staging area is also being facilitated by the use of grant money.

4.4 REDEVELOPMENT FUNDING

The City's Redevelopment Agency and Redevelopment Project Area were established in 1981. The project area and plan have been amended various times so that much of the City is within the Redevelopment Project Area. The Redevelopment Agency has been very successful in using the funds to meet the goals of the General Plan and the Land Use Element including the preservation of affordable housing, assistance to low income households, senior housing, as well as significant commercial development in all parts of the City. The City should continue to assist property owners to bring in new businesses that will help to increase property values, and thereby increase the incremental tax values within the project area. This will provide more resources to meet additional goals of the Land Use Element.

4.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is a vital element to the sustenance of a community, especially one with the uniqueness of Norco. Generally, residential property taxes do not provide enough revenue for a City to provide all of the services that residents expect. In Norco, this is exasperated by all of the additional trail maintenance and animal services that need to be provided. Without economic development and the resulting sales tax, many

of the services that residents have come to depend on would have to be curtailed or eliminated.

4.6 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development consists of all development monitoring, from planning and building, to enforcement of code provisions when projects are completed. Community Development is the primary vehicle to insure that new development meets the goals of the General Plan Land Use Element, and that land uses continue to operate in context of those goals.

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